



**UNIVERSITY *of the*
WESTERN CAPE**

A conceptual clarification of the definition of resilience:

An African perspective in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town.

**Mini-Thesis is submitted to the Institute for Social Development, Faculty of
Economics and Management Sciences at the University of the
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Master of Development Studies Degree

Boniswa Patricia Gelese

Student Number: 3317759

Supervisor: Dr. Msuthukazi Makiva

Co-Supervisor: Prof Yanga Zembe

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DECLARATION

I declare that this mini-thesis submitted for the Masters in Social Development degree, at the School of Government, University of the Western Cape is my work and has never been submitted for any other degree at any other university.

Boniswa Patricia Gelese

Student Number: 3317759

Cape Town

September 2019



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother Nombulelo Gelese. The pillar of my strength!



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ABSTRACT

There is a huge gap in literature on resilience especially that which reflects African perspective. This can be seen from many definitions of resilience that are informed by research done in the American and Eurocentric context. This gap in literature calls for more resilience research to be done in different areas filled with adversities in South Africa and Africa at large. This will help to understand the mechanisms that young people in these contexts of adversities need to adapt well and have positive outcomes despite their context of development that is filled with adverse situations. Thus, the broad objective of this study is to understand conceptual clarification of resilience in African perspective, with intent to close the gap in literature, especially where Afrocentric definition of resilience is concerned, mainly in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town, is understood. Qualitative research methods were used in order to unearth the understanding of the phenomenon. To collect data for the study, semi structured interviews were conducted. The study focussed on the youth of Gugulethu Township that were sampled through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Thus, the perspectives that were the main focus of the research were those of the youth of Gugulethu Township, mainly, Xhosa speaking people. A thematic data analysis method was used to analyse the data gathered for this study. Findings revealed that the manner in which youth of Gugulethu understands and explain resilience is mostly rooted within the culture and the context of this township. The context of Gugulethu Township which is the structure of the township, socio-economic issues that are faced by the households such as poverty and the Xhosa cultural practices, values and ideologies are reported as being the defining of resilience by the youth of Gugulethu. Furthermore, findings reveal that the overall definition of resilience by the youth of Gugulethu Township is based on the context and culture of this township. It is important that the findings of this study are not generalized as if all the townships of Cape Town, as different Townships, have homogenous stressors that create resilience. Further research can be conducted in different townships in Cape Town and the whole of Africa with larger samples to understand the relationships between different cultures and the protective factors in the journey to creating an Afrocentric definition of resilience. There should be a thorough investigation about the extent of the relationship between different contexts and protective factors to determine resilience mechanism that work best for the youth of South Africa in different areas.

CLARIFICATION OF ACRONYMS

BEST	Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
GT	Gugulethu Township
USA	United States of America



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CHAPTER ONE: LANDSCAPE OF THE STUDY

1.0. Introduction

Urbanised low-income communities in South Africa present a lot of challenges to the wellbeing and health of adolescents, challenges such as poverty, deprivation and violence (Mosavel, Ahmed and Simon, 2015). The Townships areas are examples of low-income urbanised spaces in South Africa. These Township areas are an apartheid invention, created for Black people, who according to the laws of segregation during that era were not allowed to live in the same areas as White people (Louw, 2010). While White people were moved to the suburbs and places closer to the central business district of Cape Town, Black people were shunted to the peripheries of the city, in the low-cost houses in the townships which are at the outskirts of Cape Town.

In 1950, the apartheid government reinforced the policy of land dispossession and segregation in South Africa. This Act was known as the Group Areas where all the Coloured people, Indian and Black people from inner city were forced to leave their homes and moved to the townships called the Cape flats that were created specifically for them (Louw, 2010). This was done so that the places in the inner city can only be occupied by White people and that separation between White people and other racial groups is achieved. As a result, townships like Gugulethu, Nyanga, Langa, Hanover Park and many more emerged and are known as the Cape Flats. Currently, the township areas are associated with crime, poverty and violence (Mampane and Bouwer, 2011). Gugulethu Township is one of the townships in South Africa that is filled with many stressors of this kind. Just as many townships in South Africa, Gugulethu Township is burdened by poverty, crime and unemployment (Teppo and Houssay-Holzschurch, 2013).

However, despite all the stressors present in the environment of Gugulethu and other low income areas of South Africa, there are young people who get to tell positive and successful stories of their life journeys and their current positions in life. These young people may be considered resilient as some of them manage to overcome the adversity present in the process of their upbringing. The main concern of resilience research is understanding why some people who are in the context of adversity and are expected to have negative outcomes, but end up doing well in life and present with positive outcomes whereas others in the same context fail to do so (Theron, Theron and Malindi, 2013); (Mwaniki et al, 2017); (Bouwer and Mampane,

2011); (Mosavel et al, 2013). Scholars Such as Theron et al (2013) also point out the gap in literature of resilience research by stating that there is a lot that is not known about how different populations define and interpret notions of resilience. Thus, this study's focus is on exploring the interpretation of resilience among young people in Gugulethu Township, in Cape Town, so that a contribution to literature towards the definition of resilience in South Africa and Africa, is made.

1.1. Research background

As above mentioned, the South African society poses a lot of risk factors to positive youth development and outcomes. These risk factors include crime, poverty, unemployment, a high prevalence of HIV and TB, high rates of school dropout, inequality, and violence (Theron et al, 2013); (Mampane and Bouwer, 2006). Scholars such as Dass-Brailsford (2005), Mampane and Bouwer (2006) and Theron (2007) specifically identified the township life as one of the risk factors to the development of South African youth. Like many other countries and contexts where resilience is under investigation, South Africa presents compelling reasons to study resilience as there are young people in these high-risk township environments, who have positive outcomes despite the context of adversity and multiple stressors within which they negotiate life, whereas, others fail to adapt, thus resulting in negative outcomes. The following section briefly explores the existing literature of resilience in South Africa. This is to help us understand the extent and nature of resilience among South African youth and to show the scarcity of resilience research done in the country.

Theron and Theron (2010) identified a total of 23 published articles on the resilience of South African youth between 1990- 2008 and found that researchers consider resilience to be promoted by specific personality traits which are protective factors embedded in the individual. Some of these factors are: self-regulation, extroversion, enthusiasm, empathy, optimism, autonomy, a preference for appropriate behaviour (social or systematically appropriate behaviour), internal sense of control and a sense of self worthiness (Van Rensburg and Bernard 2005). Furthermore, Govender and Kilian (2001) found that problem solving skills and cognitive appraisal are some of the protective factors that are embedded in the individual.

The family was also reported as one of the protective factors. Within the family, a mother's role in the child's life was highlighted as being the most salient source of resilience. The capacity that a mother has to bond with her child has also been found to be a critical resilience factor (Theron and Theron, 2010). Scholars such as Smukler (1990) state that the capacity of a mother to bond with her child is a protective factor on its own, especially in context where

there is violence. Theron and Theron (2010) presented the most interesting finding about the role of family in the resilience of Black township Basotho youth, from one of the rural South African communities. The scholars found that Black township youth hold a very high regard for their mothers as their pillars of strength, who encourage, enable and provide them with a sense of security. However, both mother and father figures were found to play a big role in the resilience of their children. Just as Dass-Brailsford (2005) reported, parents serve as a good example to their children when they cope well with trauma. This, for instance is an indication of strength and positive qualities as children appear to mimic these traits from their parents.

The style of parenting is also reported as being critical in the promotion of resilience in children (Theron, 2010). However, Kritzas and Grobler (2005) highlighted that parents' practices that encourage resilience are correlated with race. This means the role that a specific parenting style plays in promoting resilience depends on race, among other things. For example, when White mothers employed democratic-authoritative parenting it supported White youth with a sense of emotional coping strategies, whereas the same style of parenting encouraged Black youth to develop problem focussed coping strategies (Kritzas and Grobler, 2005).

Supportive family relationships are identified by many researchers as being one of the major sources of resilience in South African youth (Barbarin, Richter and Wet, 2000); (Dass-Brailsford, 2005); (Theron, 2007). These researchers mention that supportive family relationships protect young people against violence, help girls to cope with molestation, help youth complete tertiary education and to be resilient when facing the challenges that come with being at university. Furthermore, Theron (2007) states that the supportive family relationship enables school-going Black youth to commit towards their school education, accept poverty and develop practical solutions to the difficulties that they face daily. Ebersöhn (2007) found that the support of family helps youth to adapt in the context of HIV and AIDS.

The community was reported as having protective resources that promote resilience by scholars such as (Barbarin et al, 2000); (Govender and Kilian, 2001); (Jewitt, 2001); (Van Ransburg and Bernard, 2005). Some of the resources that are found in the community are schools whereby the teachers are reported to be supportive, fair, motivating, inspiring role models, encouraging, caring and helpful towards the learners (Barbarin et al, 2000); (Govender and Kilian, 2001). Community support is related to communities that has respected adults who support the success of youth and those that provide opportunities for therapy and counselling (Jewitt, 2001) also those that encourage active support from peers (Van Ransburg and Bernard, 2005). Interestingly, Theron (2007) found that community support that is related to promoting the sharing of expertise, food, clothing, financial resources and advice also has been identified as

promoting resilience in youth. This finding is related to the concept of *Ubuntu* which is a term that means humanity and is often described as a Nguni proverb “*umntu ngumntu ngabantu*”, which directly translates to English as “a person is a person through other persons” (Gade, 2011).

One of the most interesting findings presented by a number of researchers is that peers play a role in promoting resilience amongst each other. Peers give each other opportunities for social acceptance and development of positive identities and values (Barbarin et al, 2000). Lastly, communities encourage resilience when it gives youth opportunities to enjoy and participate in activities that allows them to sustain a sense of competence and gives them access to beneficial resources such as the library (Theron, 2007).

From the above discussion of resilience research in the South African context, it can be agreed that these studies reveal some of the protective factors embedded in the individual, family and community at large. Now we know that in the South African context there is evidence of resilience promoting factors/ protective factors. However, what we do not know is what resilience really means and how to precisely describe a resilient young South African person. Thus, this study seeks to address this question using the perspective of South African youth who reside in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town.

1.2. Problem statement

There is a huge gap in literature on resilience especially that which reflects African perspective. This can be seen from many definitions and literature of resilience that are informed by research done in the American and Eurocentric context. Thus, the major scholars who provide semantics of the term “resilience” are mostly Americans and Europeans i.e. Masten (1994), Masten and Garnezy (1990) Higgins (1994), Bernard (1995), Luthar and Cichetti (2000).

This problematic aspect of existing resilience research has been identified by scholars such as Theron et al (2013) who stated that there is lack of research in the African context about resilience in their own research study that seek to understand an African definition of resilience. Whereas, scholars such as Grotberg (1995) argue that any work done on resilience must be studied within a context of families, communities, schools and larger society. This means that the contexts of studying resilience are unique. Assertions made by these scholars suggest that resilience is a context founded concept.

Theron et al (2013) states that resilience has come to be understood as a phenomenon that is conceptualized differently in different cultures and contexts. There needs for more resilience research done in different areas of adversities in South Africa. This will help to understand the

mechanisms that young people in these contexts of adversities need to adapt well and have positive outcomes.

The South African Children`s Act (No.38 of 2005) emphasises the responsibility of adults in the call for youth assistance towards resilience (Theron et al, 2013). It is therefore important to develop insights through conducting research studies such as this one towards understanding and promoting resilience in the South African context so as to address the problem of not having an Afro-centric definition and conceptualization of resilience. Currently, there is a need for studies that seek to explore the cultural and contextual roots of resilience among South African youth so as to establish a well context-based conceptualization of resilience. This follows on the fact that there are few research studies done in the African context about resilience.

1.3. Research objectives

The broad objective of this study is to understand conceptual clarification of resilience in African perspective, with intent to close the gap in literature, especially where Afrocentric definition of resilience, mainly in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town, is understood. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To explore theoretical framework pertaining to resilience especially in high risk communities where social ills are rife.
2. To investigate the interpretations and meanings that people in Gugulethu, Cape Town attach to the notion of a resilient young person.
3. To analyse research findings regarding the understanding of resilience in Gugulethu, Cape Town and give recommendations for future study in the area of resilience.

1.4. Research questions

Question 1: What are theoretical underpinnings of resilience in high risk communities where social ills are rife?

Question 2: What are the interpretations and meanings that people in Gugulethu, Cape Town attach to the notion of a resilient young person?

Sub questions:

- (i) What are the characteristics of a resilient youth in this high risk, Black community? and what do they consider to be the key ingredients that make a young person resilient?
- (ii) Where do their ideas of what resilience come from?
- (iii) What do they know about how the Xhosa culture defines and promotes resilience among youth in their communities?
- (iv) If there are gender differences in the way they define resilience, why?

Question 3: What do research findings reveal about the understanding of resilience in Gugulethu Township and what would be the recommendation for future study?

1.5. Significance of the study

The world is full of problems; we can all agree that at some point in life everyone experiences some sort of distresses. It could be the loss of loved ones, divorce, unemployment, poverty, failing at school or even mending a broken heart after a very harsh breakup. Life in general has inevitable stressors. Resilience is the key to minimize the negative impact that these situations bring into a person's life (Masten et al, 1990). In other words, resilience is like a tool that human beings carry around to use when they are faced with problems that come with life.

According to Grotberg (1995) resilience is a powerful contribution to the development of children. Research done by the international resilience project reports that many adults crush the resilience of children by giving children mixed messages. This is not done intentionally but is done as a result of the lack of knowledge in adults about resilience and how to promote resilience in children (Grotberg 1995). It is therefore important to conduct research studies about resilience to make people aware of its positive impact and how to promote it in their children. Resilience research will help adults, caregivers, teachers or policy makers to understand the mechanisms that can be adopted to support learners, children and youth whose development is in the context of adversity or multiple stressors.

As mentioned in the previous sections of this paper, resilience is a context-based construct and there is scarcity of research done in the African context about the concept. It is therefore crucial to conduct research of this kind in order to gain a deeper understanding of resilience in the African setting. This responds to the call for more research by scholars who have studied resilience in the African setting such as Theron et al (2013) who noted the need for more studies to be done in the different areas of Africa so as to gain an Afrocentric understanding of the concept. This follows on the idea that culture is something that is different in different parts of the world and there is a strong link between resilience and culture. Thus, as Theron and Theron (2010) argue, South African research studies do not adequately describe the role of cultural and contextual roots of resilience, hence there is a need for more research in the field of resilience within the South African context.

African perspectives on existing literature in diverse fields are important because they offer opportunities to hear the voices of African people that have silenced for years under different forms of oppression against the Africans. This is very important in understanding the culture, the different phenomenon that exist in the African setting and to appreciate the existence of the African continent as a whole. Closing the gap in literature on resilience research where an

Afrocentric definition is concerned presents African based perspectives on resilience which has been reported in research as being scarce.

1.6. Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research methodology. The qualitative research methodology aims at investigating meaning of a phenomenon. The qualitative approach to research is grounded in the world of experiences whereby the researcher investigates the meaning that people attach to their experiences in the world (Ospina, 2004). Qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. This means that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Lincoln, 2000:3). Data used to answer the research questions is collected through the use of interviews. The participants were chosen through the use of purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique whereby the researchers identify and select people who are information-rich about the phenomenon that is being studied (Patton, 2002). Snowball sampling is a technique whereby one participant refers the researcher to other participants (Marshall, 1996).

1.7. Research delimitation

This research study is limited to the population of Section One and Section Two of Gugulethu Township, in Cape Town. The study is focussed on one racial group, Xhosa people who reside in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town. In South Africa, there are three racial groups namely, Black, Coloured and White people. Black people from the Xhosa culture were more appealing for this particular study so that the research scope is manageable. Furthermore, in the Western Cape province, Cape Town was chosen for the purpose of this study. Cape Town is a very big city with many Townships, Gugulethu was chosen by the researcher due to its proximity to the researcher. To minimize ethical issues that make it difficult to conduct research among people below the age of 18, this study only involved participants who are male and female, aged between 18-30 years, who reside in Gugulethu Township.

1.8. Ethical consideration

In a research project that involves people, the researcher needs to consider a number of ethical issues. This follows on the fact that every participant in a research project is entitled to respect and the protection of their rights (Trochin, 2006). The ethical issues that were considered in this research were to gain informed consent from the participants prior to conduct interviews. Thus, a consent letter from the University of the Western Cape was presented to the participants prior to conduct this study. Furthermore, the participants were informed that they are entitled to withdraw from the study at any given time, if they wish to do so. There are also issues of

confidentiality and anonymity that were considered. For example, the participants were made to be aware that their identity will remain anonymous.

1.9. Key words

Resilience

Resilience is a concept that has different definitions depending on the field of study in which this concept is used. However, it is broadly defined as a process, capacity or outcome of successful adaptation in the face of adversity Masten et al (1990).

Protective factor

Protective factors are those that promote or create resilience and is also known as resilience promoting factors. Gunnestad (2006:2) states that “protective factors are factors within the child, in the child’s environment and it is the interaction between these factors that give the child strength, skills and motivation to cope in difficult situations and to re-establish normal life.

Adversities/Risk factors

Adversities or risk factors are challenges present in a specific context. For example, these risk factors threaten positive development of young people growing in that specific context. These risk factors include crime, poverty, unemployment, a high prevalence of HIV and TB, high rates of school dropout, inequality, and violence (Theron et al, 2013, Mampane and Boucher, 2006).

Gugulethu

Is an isiXhosa name of a Township that directly translates to English as “*our pride*”. Gugulethu Township is 15km away from Cape Town. This Township emerged as a result of the apartheid laws of segregation and land dispossessions. Acts such as the Group Areas Act (1950) were created to forcefully move Black, Coloured and Indian people from the inner city to the Townships (Louw, 2010). Gugulethu Township was one of the Townships created for the group of people who were moved from the inner city to make way for White people only as it was the White people that were allowed to live in the inner city according to the laws of Apartheid (Louw, 2010). Gugulethu Township became a residential area for Black people.

Township

Townships are racially segregated urban areas in South Africa that were invented by the Apartheid government for non-White people (Black, Coloureds and Indians). The Townships areas were built on the peripheries of Towns and Cities (Pettman, 1913).

Culture

Culture is a way of life (Kalman,2009). It is how people live their life which includes their values, beliefs, norms and practices that a group of people share in common and can be used to identify them (Itulua-Abumere, 2013).

Xhosa people

Xhosa people are a group of South African people who belong to the Bantu ethnic group primarily residing in the Eastern Cape but are found in other parts of S.A. isiXhosa is the language of the Xhosa people and is one of the national languages of S.A (Nombembe, 2013).

Cape Town

Cape Town is a primate city of the Western Cape Province (Michael, 2014)

African perspective

For the purpose of this paper, African perspective is regarded as a synonym of Afrocentric.

According to Gray (2001:3), Afrocentric refers to “an idea and a perspective which holds that African people can and should see, study, interpret and interact with people, life, and reality from the vantage point of African people rather than from the vantage point of European people, or Asian, or other non-African people, or from the vantage point of African people who are alienated from Africanness”. This means that African perspective is the African`s views of phenomena from the perspective of African people which is informed by African culture.

Conceptual clarification

Conceptual clarification is a theoretical contribution made by research which throws new light onto a concept. Central in conceptual clarification is the creation of meaning and the development of a theory (Kramer, 1993).

1.10. Chapter summary and conclusion

This chapter gave the research background whereby some historical information of how township areas of South Africa such as Gugulethu Township came into being was explicated. Gugulethu Township is the product of the apartheid government and the legacies of apartheid are still present in this area. Currently, this township is faced with socio-economic issues such as poverty, unemployment and crime. These issues constitute what is known as stressors or adversities. Young people who are growing in Gugulethu are faced with a number of adversities which puts them at risks of having negative outcomes. However, despite all these stressors present in their process of development, there are some young people who get to tell positive stories of their life and their current positions in life. Such young people can be labelled as being resilient.

Resilience research is concerned with the question of why some people in the same context of adversities end up having positive outcomes whereas others have negative outcomes, especially in the Gugulethu area. The background section discusses the research studies about resilience conducted in the South African context. This discussion on resilience research helps one to understand the extent and nature of resilience in South African youth which also shows that the notion of resilience needs to be explored in different areas of the country as there is a scarcity of this kind of research. This points out the problem in the field of resilience research, that there is not much done in South Africa about resilience thus there is scarcity of resilience research done in this country. This makes this study significant as resilience is a very important process of human development that ought to be explored. This will help to understand the mechanisms that young people in areas such as Gugulethu Township need to overcome the challenges that they are faced with.

The objectives and research questions are all related to exploring resilience in Gugulethu youth and understanding how the young people of this area understand resilience. By doing so, one will be aware of the mechanisms that people in high risk areas such as Gugulethu Township need to overcome the adversities that they are faced with. This study is a qualitative and quantitative research study. Data is collected through the use of interviews with the youth of Gugulethu Township.

1.11. Overview of the study

The research paper is organised into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and background to the study. Chapter two discussed next presents the literature review and theoretical framework relevant to the study. Issues discussed under this chapter include: the etymology of the word “resilience”, how the concept is defined and the contestations around the definition of this concept. This is followed by the factors that promote resilience and how a resilient young person is described. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses the relationship between resilience and culture. Lastly, the chapter closes with the Ecological Systems theory by which this study is embedded. The next chapter which is chapter three presents the research methodology and the methods used to conduct the research study are outlined. In this regard, chapter four presents the data and analysis whereby a thematic data analysis is used to analyse the results of the study. Lastly, conclusion and recommendations are presented in chapter five. A specific layout of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter one

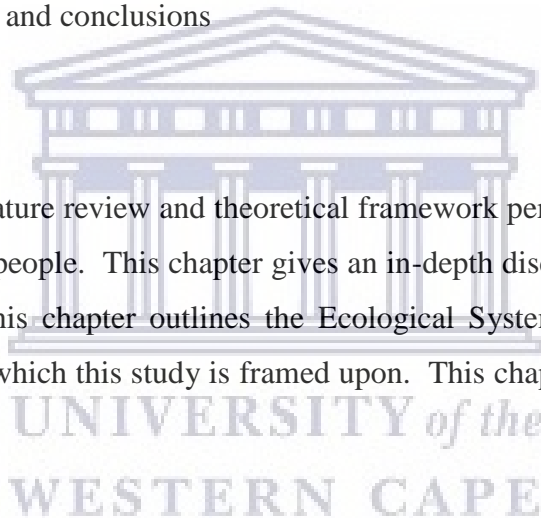
Chapter one provided an introduction and background to the study. This chapter discussed the context of Gugulethu Township with a brief history of how this area came into being which shows why the area is suitable to study resilience. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the importance of studying resilience in South African areas such as Gugulethu Township. The specific topics that are covered in this chapter are:

- Introduction
- Research background
- Problem statement
- Research objectives and research questions
- Significance of the study
- Research methodology
- Research delimitations
- Ethical considerations
- Chapter summary and conclusions

Chapter two

Chapter two provides literature review and theoretical framework pertaining to the concept of resilience amongst young people. This chapter gives an in-depth discussion of the concept of resilience. Furthermore, this chapter outlines the Ecological Systems Theory which is the theoretical framework by which this study is framed upon. This chapter covers the following topics:

- Introduction
- The etymology of resilience
- Defining resilience
- Contestations in the definition of resilience
- Factors that promote resilience
- What do resilient youth look like?
- Resilience and culture
- Theoretical Framework: The ecological systems theory
- Microsystem: Home, school and neighbourhood
- Mesosystem: The connection between microsystems such as the family and peers
- Exosystem: Social setting, economic system and education system
- Macrosystem: cultural ideologies, cultural practises and religion
- Chronosystem: The changes over time



- Discussion of the Ecological systems theory

Chapter three

Chapter three is the research methodology and design whereby the methods used to conduct this study are outlined. These methods are based on the quantitative and qualitative research.

The chapter is organised as follows:

- Introduction
- Research designs and methodologies
- Quantitative research study
- Qualitative research study
- Research techniques
- Sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Snowball sampling
- Data collection
- Interviews
- Data analysis
- Ethical considerations
- Research Delimitations
- Chapter summary and conclusion



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Chapter four

Chapter four is the presentation and analysis of findings. A thematic data analysis is adopted as a method for analysing the findings obtained from the interviews. This chapter is organised around the four layers of the Ecological Systems Theory namely, the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem and Macrosystem. These four layers of the environment are the themes that are used to organise, analyse and interpret the findings of this study. The specific topics that are covered in this chapter are:

- Introduction
- Research findings and analysis
- Theme One: Microsystem
- Sub-theme one: factors within the individual
- Sub-theme three: Factors in the school environment
- Sub-theme four: Factors in the neighbourhood
- Theme two: Mesosystem
- The economic system

- Education system
- The structural conditions that create experiences of adversities
- Theme four: Macrosystem
- Cultural practises
- Cultural ideology
- Religion
- Discussion of research findings
- The importance of the Ecological systems theory in the discussion of findings
- Chapter summary and conclusion

Chapter five

Chapter five presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the findings of this research study. The outline of this chapter is as follows:

- Introduction
- Research conclusions and recommendations
- Summary of chapters
- Detailed discussion of research findings
- Research conclusions
- Recommendations and Future research
- Recommendations
- Recommendation one: An explanation of the term “resilience” in African languages
- Recommendation two: Resilience public awareness programs
- Recommendation three: Integration of resilience into the education system
- Future research
- Chapter summary

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CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON
RESILIENCE

2.0. Introduction

The previous chapter provided an introduction, problem statement, research methodology, study delimitation and contextualized the study. This current chapter presents review of the literature that pertains to the concept of resilience among young people. The relevance of a literature review is to establish the interface amongst various perspectives of a particular research topic as well as what others have done in the field of study. The first section therefore discusses the etymology of resilience, this is followed by a section that presents the definitions of resilience and the contestations that exist when defining this concept. This is followed by a section that discusses factors that promote resilience and the characteristics that resilient youth present as reported by studies conducted in different parts of the world. This section furthermore demonstrates the relationship between resilience and culture. The section ends with a theoretical perspective on resilience using the Ecological Systems Theory.

2.1. The etymology of resilience

Research shows that Holling (1973) introduced the concept of resilience in the field of ecology. According to Holling (1973:17) “resilience determines the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb change of state variable, driving variables and parameters, and still persist”. According to this definition, resilience is the persistence of a system to absorb changes. The word “resilience” comes from Latin language from the word “resilire” which means to “bounce” or to “leap back” (Windle, 2011, Manyena et al, 2011).

It is important to note that the history of the Latin word *resilire* is unknown but was probably a word used in classical times (Alexander, 2013). This understanding of the history of the word *resilience* seems to be common in literature as other scholars also report that this word comes from the Latin language. For example, according to Francart (2010) resilience came into use as a word probably from the Latin language verb *resaltare* which means to rebound or bounce back again. Alexander (2013) concludes that the most common historical uses of the word resilience were to describe leaping, jumping and rebounding. However, it is evident in literature

from research done on resilience that there is little consensus on a single definition of this concept. When seeking to answer the question “what is resilience?” there are different answers and perspectives that one can find from research on resilience; these perspectives vary from broad to narrow perspectives.

2.2. Defining resilience

Masten et al (1990) provide a broad definition of resilience by stating that resilience is a process, capacity or outcome of successful adaptation in the face of adversity. Similarly, Richardson, Neiger and Kumpfer (1990) argue that resilience is a process of coping with challenging life events and provides an individual with additional coping skills. These two definitions suggest that resilience can be broadly understood as a process and outcome that shows well adaptation in adverse situations whereby the individual has the ability to cope under these adverse situations. Thus, a resilient person is defined by Wollin and Wollin (1993) as one that has the capacity to bounce back and repair themselves and has the ability to withstand hardships. This is similar to how Liptak and Leutenberg (2012) define resilient people. According to these authors (Liptak and Leutenberg ,2012) resilient people are those that are able to adapt successfully under adverse conditions such as poverty, mental illness, divorce, financial problems et cetera.

Higgins (1994) describes resilience as a self-righting process or a process of growth. This definition highlights resilience as a process of human development. The process of resilience is described by Masten (1994) as an interplay between an individual`s certain characteristics and the broader environment where the individual is able to find balance between stress and his/her ability to cope. Here, Masten (1994) reveals the importance of the relationship between the individual and the broader environment in understanding resilience as a process. Masten (1994) further argues that resilience is an important process in a person`s life transition: it is a dynamic and developmental process.

According to Bernard (1995:2), resilience describes a set of qualities that foster a process of successful adaption despite risk and adversity. This definition of resilience is based on qualities that a person has which helps them to adapt successfully when faced with adversity/ adversities. From the definitions of resilience mentioned above, one can tell that resilience is defined as a process that is fostered by a set of qualities to produce a positive outcome in adverse situations. In the simplest terms, Schoon and Bynner (2003) state that resilience is broadly understood to mean positive adaptation in the face of adversity.

Just as Mampane and Bouwer (2011) conclude that the general definition of resilience is to successfully adapt despite risk and adversity. Similarly, according to Santos (2012) the essence of resilience is described as the ability to bounce back from some form of disruption, stress, or change. Based on the definitions by scholars that have been mentioned above, resilience can be understood as a concept that refers to the ability to overcome hardships. According to Mwaniki et al (2017) most researchers define resilience as a strength-based construct that is focused on providing protective factors, these protective factors enhance success and reduce the impact of negative events that one is exposed to.

The term resilience has been applied in diverse fields of studies. For example, in metallurgy resilience is used to measure the resistance of a metallic bar to shock (Francart, 2010), whereas in social ecological systems, resilience is defined in relation to three characteristics. These characteristics are described by Folke (2001) as, (i) the extent of shock that the system can absorb and remain in its original state (ii) the degree to which the system is able to self-organize (iii) the extent to which the system can build capacity for adaptation and learning. In biology resilience is used to refer to the ability to live in an environment where there are changes and attacks by predators (Francart, 2010). This definition suggest that a resilient organism is one that is able to face the attacks by predators and manage to live in an environment despite the presence of these attacks and predators. In human development, the beginning of resilience research to explain human behaviour was in the 1980s when a group of North American researchers were investigating why a number of vulnerable children were adapting well in the presence of stressors and their study was focussed on “stress resistance” (Theron and Theron, 2010). Since then, resilience has been studied by different scholars that seek to explain why some people who are in the context of adversities manage to have a positive outcome and others fail to do so. In this regard, resilience research has been ongoing for years and presented different definitions as discussed above, but there are contestations that can be observed from the definitions of this concept.

2.3. Contestations in defining the construct of resilience

In research on resilience, it has been largely recognized that there are contestations that exists when it comes to providing the definition of resilience. As discussed in the previous section, there are different definitions of resilience that different scholars provide. According to Windle (2010), the different definitions of resilience show the inconsistencies that are related to the definition of the nature of potential risk and protective factors. Some resilience researchers define resilience with a focus on understanding the mechanisms by which some of the key factors associated with the concept might operate. In this perspective, resilience refers to the

process that includes positive adaptation in the context of adversity. An example of this perspective of defining resilience is that provided by Masten (1990). Masten's perspective considers resilience as a process, capacity or outcome of successful adaptation in the face of adversity. This definition considers the context within which resilience is studied, which is the presence of adversity, and the outcome of achieving the process of being resilient, which is the positive adaptation. However, just like many other definitions mentioned above, this definition does not clarify what the adversity is, what levels of adversity qualifies as a context to study resilience; it also does not include the fact that there are differences in the way in which different populations and cultures define risks and adversities.

Many other definitions view resilience as an outcome where the process of resilience is a process of positive adaptation or adjustments, with the positive adaptation or adjustments being the defining factors of resilience (Windle, 2010). The main points of debate in defining resilience as an outcome are determined by the criteria that researchers use to assess whether the outcome is a good one and whether it reflects adaptation. Thus, scholars such as Zolkoski and Bullock (2012) argue that measuring successful adaptation to hardships is one of the issues that are controversial when it comes to defining resilience and what constitutes a resilient behaviour; how one can tell that a person is resilient.

There are other definitions of resilience that are points of departure for debates around defining resilience; one such a definition is provided by Connor (2003) that resilience is a term that represents personal qualities that enable the individual to overcome adversities. This is similar to the definition provided by Ong, Bergeman, Biscounti and Wallace (2006) who state that resilience is a personality trait that gives the individual the ability to overcome and bounce back from adversity. This means that resilience is not a given response to all adversity situations.

This suggests that resilience is a representation of personal qualities that help an individual thrive in the face of adversity. According to Windle (2010) the problems of defining resilience based on personal characteristics are that: firstly, the assumption made by some scholars, that psychological resilience is a fixed and stable personality trait. Thus, if this perspective of resilience is to be used as an adequate one, it means that resilience cannot be an observed trait. Secondly, defining resilience as a representation of personality traits is inadequate as this definition suggests that those who do not have these personality traits are failures and are not resilient. The other problem with a definition of resilience that is based on personality traits and individual characteristics, is that it fails to take into account the role of the structural environment in shaping how a person adapts to and copes with adversity.

Lastly, some definitions emphasize on protective factors as being the main defining factors of resilience. For example, the definition provided by Mwaniki et al (2011) stating that resilience is focused on providing protective factors that enhance success and reduce the impact of negative events. This approach to defining resilience has also been argued to be inadequate. According to Grotberg (1995), the problem with defining resilience is understanding the interaction between the protective factors and roles that these factors play in different contexts, how they are expressed and where people get these factors from.

The debates around the definition of resilience are based on what should be the most defining factor of what the concept is and how to adequately explain that specific factor. For example, if one is to argue that resilience is most defined by the positive adaptation of young people in the face of adversity, the question that follows is what is meant by positive adaptation and how to measure adversity. For this reason, the author of this research believes that there it is not necessary to seek for one defining factor of resilience and to stress on adequately explaining such a factor.

Resilience should therefore be viewed as a multifaceted process that involves protective factors and the outcome of positive adaptation which is studied in the context of adversity. The focus of research should therefore be on the protective factors and the positive adaptation as these are bound to be different in different contexts. This means that we can never have a one size fits all definition of protective factors and/or positive adaptation as there are different contexts and situations, this is the same as what adversity is. The factors that influence resilience are open for investigation in different contexts and how such factors are measured is also a subject to be investigated as these are bounded to the contexts in which resilience is being studied.

2.4. Factors that promote resilience

Studying the resilience of youth that are faced with adversities or life-threatening situations has gained a lot of research interest across the world. As mentioned in the previous sections, there are different perspectives about resilience, however, there seems to be a growing consensus on what is known about the concept and the factors that promote it. Firstly, in studying resilience, there has to be a context of adversity and positive adaptation to that context. Secondly, for one to be able to positively adapt to the context of adversity they need protective or resilience factors, these are the factors that promote resilience. This suggests that at the centre of resilience research and the conceptualization of resilience there are protective factors. Just as Masten and Reed (2002) explain that resilience is conceptualized as a construct that comprises of intrapersonal factors (internal protective factors) and interpersonal factors (external resilience

factors). Protective factors are the characteristics of the child, the family and wider environment that help in reducing the negative impact of adversity in the outcomes of the child (Masten and Reed, 2002). Gunnestad (2006:2) states that “protective factors are factors within the child, in the child’s environment and it is the interaction between these factors that give the child strength, skills and motivation to cope in difficult situations and to re-establish normal life”.

As mentioned above that Masten and Reed (2002) categorise the protective factors in two categories which are: internal and external protective factors. The internal protective factors are mostly personality and dispositional attributes of the individual whereas the external protective factors refer to factors found in the family and the larger environment (Masten and Reed, 2002). It is the protective factors that differentiate individuals who survive when faced with adversities from those who do not (Cheung et al, 2011).

According to Jessor (1993) protective factors shift the attention from risk factors to the process of how people successfully negotiate risk. Thus, the studies of resilience are more focussed on the protective factors as these are the building blocks of resilience. A factor can only be labelled as being protective if it reduces or even prevents the impact of risk factor(s) and contribute towards the individual’s positive response to adversity (Mosavel et al, 2015). It has been reported that children are more likely to display resilience when more protective factors are displayed to them (Howard, Dryden and Johnson, 1999). Some of the commonly mentioned protective factors in literature include: optimism, perceptions of control, self-efficacy and active coping (Bernard 1995); (Luthar and Zigler, 1991). A sense of meaning in life as well as a clear and positive identity, are also considered as some of the most important protective factors (Cheung et al, 2011). Caring personal relationships have been found to serve protective functions and are labelled as protective factors that set a foundation for trust and building trusting relationships that serve as a base for healthy future development (Gunnestad, 2006).

Bernard (1995:2) captures the protective factors in resilience research conducted in the United States and categorises these factors under three specific categories namely:

(i) Caring and supportive relationships

“The presence of at least one caring person, someone who conveys an attitude of compassion, who understands that no matter how awful a child’s behaviour, the child is doing the best he or she can, given his or her experience-provides support for healthy development and learning. For example, a caring relationship with a teacher gives youth

the motivation to want to succeed which in turn promotes their resilience” (Bernard, 1995:2).

(ii) Positive and high expectations

“Research has indicated that schools that establish high expectations for all youth and give them the support necessary to achieve them have high rates of academic success. They also have lower rates of problem behaviours such as dropping out, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and delinquency than other schools”. For example, teachers conveying the message that the student has everything that they need to be successful are not only showing the student that they are expected to be successful, but also promote their resilience (Bernard, 1995:2).

(iii) Opportunities for meaningful participation

According to Bernard (1995), when young people are provided with opportunities for meaningful participation they are likely to be resilient. For example, there are practises that can be adopted by teachers in the school environment that would serve the students with resilience promoting factors (Bernard, 1995:2). These practises include:

- “asking questions that encourage critical thinking and dialogue (especially around current social issues),
- making learning more hands-on, involving students in curriculum planning, using participatory evaluation strategies, letting students create the governing rules of the classroom,
- employing cooperative approaches (such as cooperative learning, peer helping, crossage mentoring, and community service)” (Bernard, 1995:2).

Furthermore, Bernard (1995) reported that the indicators of resilience are social competence skills which refer to the ability to elicit positive responses from others, empathy, communication skills and the ability to move in-between cultures as important buffers. In addition, Bernard (1995:2) includes “having a sense of purpose and belief in a bright future, having goals, aspirations, motivation, persistence, hopefulness, and problem solving skills, including the ability to plan, and spiritual connectedness such as the belief in God as factors serving protective functions”.

There are studies that report the same findings as those reported by Bernard (1995). For example, Rutter (1987) concluded that the school environment could act as an important protective factor whereby learners hold positions of responsibility in school and develop good relationships with their teachers as well as classmates; this would fall under the caring and supportive relationship in the categories presented by Bernard (1995). According to Nodding (1988), caring relationships between teachers and learners give the learners motivation to succeed. Similarly, Wermer and Smith (1989) reported that teachers at schools provide support for healthy development and learning and have been identified as positive role models in the lives of resilient children. In the South African context, some of the protective factors are listed by Theron et al (2013) and include constructive attachment, bonding with supportive others, self-regulation, behaviour and emotions that are considered socially or systematically appropriate.

The study done by Grotberg (1995) based on research findings from The International Resilience Project, provides interesting information about resilience from international research done with thirty countries. This multi-country study concluded that every country uses the same set of resilience factors to promote resilience. However, the way that these factors are used varies according to the situations and contexts. Gunnestad (2006) confirms these findings; the scholar found that whilst protective factors are universal, their importance, how they are expressed or how they operate to create resilience may differ across contexts and cultures. Furthermore, scholars categorise these protective factors in different ways.

According to Mwaniki et al (2017) protective factors can be grouped into two major categories i.e. internal and external protective factors. The internal protective factors are mostly personality or dispositional attributes, and external protective factors are mainly development support and opportunities (Mwaniki et al, 2017). Scholars group these protective factors in different categories of their choice.

For example, Gunnestad (2006) has three categories in which he groups the protective factors:

(i) Network factors – external support

These are elements of external support from friends and family, neighbours, teachers, church, *et cetera*.

(ii) Abilities and skills

This is the inner strength generated by inborn qualities and the skills learned through the use of those innate qualities. Specifically, the abilities refer to innate qualities such as mental and physical strength, emotional stability and intellect. The skills are social

and emotional skills that help one to explain themselves and understand others, solve problems, make friends and to be able to help others.

(iii) Meaning, values and faith

These refer to the existential support that emanates from one's understanding, values, attitudes and faith.

2.5. What do resilient youth look like?

According to the Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2012), resilient youth show the following:

- (i) **Strong relationships:** they almost always have strong, positive and supportive relationships with at least one responsive adult within the family or even outside the family.
- (ii) **Self-mastery:** they are confident in their own abilities and live with the strong belief that they can deal with tough situations and best reach more positively when faced with adversities.
- (iii) **Self-control:** when children have the skills to regulate their own behaviour, engage in goal setting and problem-solving and can manage their impulses, they have a developed set of skills useful in coping with stress.
- (iv) **Solid communities:** they have connections or ties with their larger community, through faith-based organizations, cultural traditions or other community activities which help to protect them from the effects of stressful events.

According to the Teen Resiliency Building Workbook developed by Liptak and Leutenberg (2012) based in the United States of America, teens who are resilient can be described as follows:

- They want to achieve, enjoy studying and work at school;
- They are optimistic;
- They are not weakened by problems or difficult situations, they rather see such problems and difficult situations as challenges;
- They take positive risks and actions;
- They are spontaneous; and
- They have high self-esteem, self-confidence, self-concept, and sense of self.

Mwaniki et al (2017) in their study investigating academic resilience in Africa (Kenya), found that students with academic resilience have:

- Good interpersonal skills;
- Confidence in their own ability to learn;
- Positive attitude towards school;
- Pride in their ethnicity;
- High expectations

The study conducted by Gonzalez and Padilla (1997) on the resilience of Mexican American students found that resilient students have significantly higher perceptions of family and peer support, teacher feedback, positive connection to school, and they place high value on school and peer belonging. From the findings of the above studies on resilience, it can be concluded that resilience is associated with positive attributes, behaviours and outcomes. The different descriptions of a resilient young person show that resilience is a concept that is defined differently across contexts, cultures and situations.

The above discussion shows that the definition of resilience and the protective factors that promote resilience are understood differently in different contexts. The following table 1 is a summary of the different ways that the protective factors have been reported in research studies conducted in different contexts. This table (table 1) further illustrates the different perceptions of resilience by comparing how the resilience promoting factors are conceptualized in the American setting according to the study done by Bernard (1995) and the South African context based on the findings of research reviews by (Theron and Theron, 2010).

From the following table 1, we can see that in these two different contexts, the description of factors that promote resilience in young people are not same, just as discussed in this section. This can be observed from the way that the protective factors are categorised. In the study by Theron and Theron (2010) there are three categories namely; personality traits, family and community which are identified as being the sources of resilience for the South African youth. Whereas in the description of protective factors by Bernard (1995) we can see that the three categories are different from those presented by Theron and Theron (2010) and the explanation of these categories is also different. These differences in explaining and describing protective factors are very common in literature.

Table 1: Protective factors in SA VS protective factors in USA

Protective factors as reported by Theron and Theron (2010) in South African research studies	Protective factors as reported by Bernard (1995) in studies conducted in the United States of America
<p style="text-align: center;">Personality traits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulation • Extroversion • Enthusiasm • Optimism • Preference for appropriate behaviours • Internal sense of control • Sense of self worthiness 	<p style="text-align: center;">Caring and supportive relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ At least one person who provides for healthy child development. For example: Positive relationships with teachers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • The capacity of a mother to bond with her child • Style of parenting • Supportive family relationships 	<p style="text-align: center;">Positive and high expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Teachers conveying the message that the developing person has everything that they need to be successful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• Community •• Schools in the community • Role models • Community support • Ubuntu • Peers 	<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities for participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking questions that encourage critical thinking and dialogue (especially around current social issues), • Making learning more hands-on, involving students in curriculum planning, using participatory evaluation strategies, letting students create the governing rules of the classroom, • Employing cooperative approaches (such as cooperative learning, peer helping, cross-age mentoring, and community service).

Source: Configured by Author

2.6. Resilience and culture

It is evident in literature that there is a link between culture and resilience. Culture refers to the way of life, the way a person thinks and behaves their meaning and values (Kalman, 2009).

The cultural values and norms that control a person’s behaviour and thinking are what have been mostly associated with resilience. Researchers such as Gunnestad (2006) state that culture is interrelated to protective factors. This means that, culture is a critical factor in resilience given that protective factors are the building blocks of resilience. There are values that are attached to culture and are associated with specific groups of protective factors. For example,

regarding the Latino youth, loyalty and attachments to family, collectivism, respect for authority and warmth in interpersonal relationships, are all protective factors that are found to be central in their culture (Stutman et al, 2002).

In some cultures, parents help children to be resilient by letting them to be depended on themselves for everything in their lives and this is considered good for resilience while others maintain a strong relationship with their children (Grotberg, 1995). Furthermore, Grotberg (1995) reported that in other cultures faith plays a bigger role in encouraging children to be resilient. According to the study done by Theron and Theron (2010), in the South African context, resilience appears to be promoted by protective factors embedded in culture, specifically in religion. Similarly, Scholars such as Smukler (1990) Barbarin, Richter and De Wet (2000), Edwards, Sakasa and Van Wyk (2005) found that religious practises (Christianity and Ancestral) and personal faith are critical protective factors that are related to culture.

To understand the link between resilience and culture it is important to go beyond the cultural expressions and look at how the underlying cultural values and cultural practises that controls people`s behaviour contribute towards their resilience. Theron et al (2013) found that the traditional African values of *Ubuntu* encouraged resilience among Basotho township youth. *Ubuntu* is a traditional African culture that follows on a collective way of being where the individual is part of the larger community and the community facilitates the individual`s self-realization (Theron et al, 2013). According to this African culture, an individual does not exist on their own, but exist as part of the larger community. *Ubuntu* is fundamentally based on certain values and principles, such as cooperation, hospitality, harmony and mutual aid (Theron et al, 2013).

Other scholars point out cultural values that are directly linked to promoting resilience. One of the values that are typical in indigenous African families is that of interdependence among extended family members; this is a value which was reported by Dass-Brailsford (2005) as being instrumental in encouraging resilience. According to Pienaar, Beukes and Esterhuyse (2006) practises that promote resilience i.e. conforming attitude to authority and religious commitment are associated with cultural values of Afrikaans and African speaking adolescents in South Africa. It was found by German, (2005) that, a religious community gives more support to young people and community support is one of the critical factors that promote resilience.

From the above-mentioned discussions, it is clear that culture does have an impact in generating resilience. Scholars such as German (2005) mentioned the need for research focused on the models of resilience that are sensitive to Southern African cultures. Furthermore, scholars such as Theron and Theron (2010) have called for more research studies in the South African context about resilience as the current research studies have been proven to not adequately describe the cultural and contextual roots of resilience in Africa.

2.7. Theoretical Framework: The Ecological Systems Theory

This section describes the theoretical framework used within this study. The theoretical framework is the structure that support or hold a theory of a research study, it introduces and describes the theory or theories that explain why the research under study exists (Abend, 2008). This study is framed upon the Ecological Systems Theory. The Ecological Systems Theory was developed by a development psychologist named Urie Bronfenbrenner, in 1979, in an attempt to explain human development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), a person's development needs to be studied within the context of their environment that is formed by systems of relationships. This work was written in 1979, titled "The Ecology of Human Development". The roots of this theory are in the biological definition of ecology where ecology is defined as the relations of organisms to one another and their surroundings (Johnsons, 2008). Thus, Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined ecology as the relations between the individual and his/her environment to develop and survive.

This theory was developed as a new perspective to the process of human development, it emphasizes on the developing person, the environment and especially the evolving interaction between the two. Bronfenbrenner (1979:1) defined development as "a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with the environment". The main principle of this theory is that the society is a factor that influences the development of a person. Thus, Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that human development is the product of interaction between the person and the environment. This theory explains human development by considering the person's surroundings whereby everything is seen as interrelated and development is seen as something that is bounded within context, culture and history. It is important to note that the person's surrounding environment according to the theory starts from his or her own biology.

The theory emphasizes that the child's own biology is a primary environment that influences his or her development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, the child's own personality traits including cognitive skills has primary influence on his or her own development process. The theory place emphasises on two elements, (i) the context of the child's surrounding and (ii) the development of the child; thus, the Ecological Systems Theory is all about the developing child

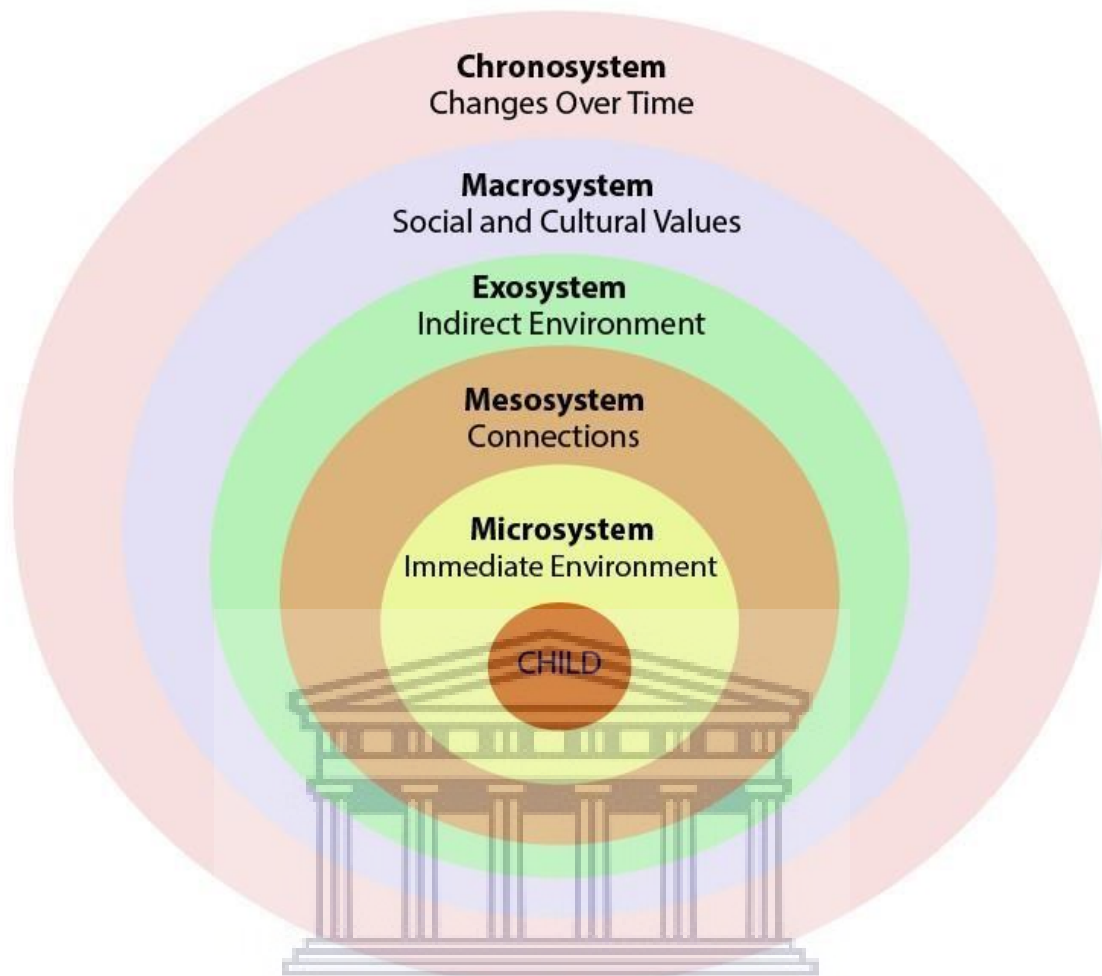
and the environment in which the child develops in. The theory explains human development as a product of the interaction between the developing person and the environment. It is important to note that resilience is one of the processes of human development, this will be further discussed in the course of this section.

The key actors of the Ecological Systems Theory are the individual and the immediate setting which is the environment. The environment is presented by circles that are interrelated and the developing person who is an active actor is at the centre of these circles. Each circle shows a different context and all these contexts are interrelated in the process of the child's development. The theory assumes that during the process of human development, the active developing person is a central force where he or she shapes the environments, evokes responses from the environment and reacts to these responses. According to the initial ecological systems theory, the environment consists of four layers of systems which interact and can affect and be affected by the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) development is a product of processes that consists of complex reciprocal interactions among persons, objects and symbols in the immediate environment. Also, the interactions are embedded in a larger context that has a significant impact on development. These interactions are labelled as proximal processes which occur between the developing person and the environment over time. Proximal processes are the interactions between the developing person and people in their environment and these processes assist in developing skills and knowledge. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) in the initial Ecological Systems Theory, Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained that the environment is made up of four layers of systems, namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. These systems interact in complex ways and can be affected by the developing person and also affect the developing person. Thus, Bronfenbrenner divided the environment into the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and later added the fifth layer known as the chronosystem. For this study, only the early ideas of Bronfenbrenner will be used, that is the four layers of the environment namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. All the systems of the ecological systems theory are presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



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2.7.1. Microsystem: Home, School and Neighbourhood

The microsystem is the layer of the environment that is closest to the person and is the most influential level. Bronfenbrenner (1979: 22) defines the microsystem as “a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics”. This is the smallest and closest environment that the developing person lives in. It is made up of daily home, school and neighbourhood environment. Within the microsystem, interactions include personal relationships with family members at home, relationships between the developing person and their teachers. This also includes interactions between the child and their neighbourhood environment. The developing person has direct contact with this level of environment. Examples of domains that form part of the microsystem are homes, schools and neighbourhood where there are family, teachers, role models and peers. In the microsystem, relationships are bidirectional which means that the

way that the developing person treats and reacts to other people in their microsystem affects how they treat the person in return. This means that the developing person is an active participant in their microsystem.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) found that it is possible for people to have different experiences while in the microsystem. For example, twins who are raised the same way in the same house might have different experiences in their microsystems. This, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) is caused by each person's particular personality traits, which are influenced by unique and genetic and biological factors. This suggests that the person's own internal factors such as personality traits are also part of their microsystem as these have an impact on the child's interactions in their environment.

2.7.2. Mesosystem: The connection between microsystems such as the family and peers

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979) the mesosystem level consists of the interactions between the different parts of the person's microsystem. Thus, the mesosystem covers the interdependence and the interconnection of the person's microsystems to one another. It comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 25). It is within the mesosystem that the microsystems interact and assert influence upon another and these interactions have an impact on the developing individual Bronfenbrenner (1979). This means that the mesosystem is a system of the microsystems as it encompasses the interactions of the microsystems. For example, the mesosystem includes the relationship between family and the peers of the developing person. The family and the peers are in the child's microsystem but the relationship between the two forms the mesosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains that positive development is likely to be achieved if the mesosystem is filled with positive interactions. For example, if the peers have behaviours that are acceptable according to child's home environment, the outcomes of positive development are likely to be achieved.

2.7.3. Exosystem: Social setting, Economic system and Education system

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the exosystem refers to the setting or settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant but the events that take place in such settings affect the developing person. This means that the exosystem are environmental settings that indirectly affect the developing person in their process of development. Social settings are examples of the environment that makes up the exosystem. This makes the exosystem the child's indirect environment because the child does not have an active role in the exosystem but is indirectly influenced by factors and activities that take place in this environment. For example, the exosystem includes the decisions that affect the developing person but the person

has no participation in process of making such decisions. For instance, a child would be affected by the parents losing their jobs and being unemployed and this could lead to a situation whereby the child is forced to live a life of poverty. Here we see that the child had no active participation in what happened to their parent's job but the child is still affected by this event, this is what the exosystem is made of, the interactions between settings that the child has no active role in but such settings have an impact on the child's development.

This layer also includes people, places or settings that the developing person may not interact with but is still affected by them. Bronfenbrenner (1979) found that people or places that the developing person does not have direct interaction with, may still have an impact on the developing person's life and their process of development. For example, structural conditions of an area are a setting that the developing person does not participate in creating but this setting influences their process of development. The same applies to systems such as the economic and education system that are in place in a specific context.

These systems are not created or controlled by the developing person but these systems have an impact on the life of the developing person and their process of development. Thus, their processes of development may be filled with factors that are results of the structural conditions, education system and the economic system that have an impact on the developing person. What is important to note here is that the education system for example, is a system that is in place but the child does not actively negotiate how this system turns out to be or any changes that are to be made on the system as this is the job of the government or policy makers. However, the education system of an area has an impact on the developing person and this is the essence of the exosystem hence this layer of the environment is labelled as the indirect environment because it influences the developing person indirectly.

2.7.4. Macrosystem: cultural ideologies, cultural practises and religion

The macrosystem "refers to the consistencies, in the form and content of low-order system that exist or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:25). This means that the macrosystem is the culture that the child lives in. If we look at how the concept of culture is defined by Kalman (2009) who states that culture is a way of life, we would then understand that the macrosystem includes everything that happens in all the other layers of the environment which makes up the child's way of life. For example, the rules that are enforced at home are part of the microsystem but these rules control the child's way of life, what they value the most and their beliefs. The values and beliefs form part of the child's macrosystem. If the parents follow a certain religion at home, this will have an impact on the child and their

belief system. Therefore, the macrosystem are social and cultural values that are created in the child's ecosystem which is the child's environment that includes everything in the environment. In other words, activities in the other layers of the environment also form part of the macrosystem as these activities shape how the child lives and the child's way of life is their macrosystem.

The macrosystem is made up of the person's cultural patterns and values, the person's dominant beliefs and ideas (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This layer describes the cultural context of the society in which the individual lives in. For example, children who grow up in places where the political systems are dominated by race-based inequalities will have a different development process compared to those whose political systems are dominated by equality. Their development could include racial discrimination and a struggle against this whereas those whose context of development is dominated by equality might not have this type of a problem. All of these are part of the larger cultural context which is the macrosystem and they impact the person's ways of life and their development. Some areas are dominated by strong cultural roots whereby cultural practises and ideologies add value to the development of young people living in such areas. Thus, the macrosystem is the larger layer of the environment that consists of the overall culture that the individual lives and it has a significant impact on the individual's development.

2.7.5. Chronosystem: The changes over time

The chronosystem is made up of environmental events including the changes that occurs throughout the developing person's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These changes include any socio-historical events. It includes the important dimension of time in all ecological systems. For example, attitudes towards Black people to receive quality tertiary education and equal chances at life as White people in South Africa have changed over time and such changes have an impact on the opportunities available for a Black developing child in this country. Here we see that the changes that occur over time influences the developing person's life and this is the level of the environment that is known as the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The chronosystem is not used for the purpose of this paper, however it has a significant role in longitudinal studies that seek to understand human development over a specific period of time.

2.7.6. Discussion of the Ecological systems theory

The main argument that the Ecological System Theory stresses on is that, the individual's development cannot be understood in isolation from their surrounding environment. The standpoint that the individual always develops within a context has been criticized by Paquette and Ryan (2001). According to Paquette and Ryan (2001), the individual needs to be seen for

their individual conditions. Thus, the centre of attention should be on the individual's ability to influence their own success and the theory does not see the individual as an independent actor but sees the individual as being embedded on their environment (Paquette and Ryan, 2001).

It has been noted that the theory accounts for the complexity of the development and can be applied universally (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). The weakness of this theory is that it may be difficult to apply in practise for two main reasons. The first reason is, the theory postulates that all factors of the environment even the smallest factors form part of the systems of influence (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). According to Bronfenbrenner, all factors of the environment are mutually and systematically influential which makes the theory difficult to implement (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). If you collect information about all spheres of an individual's environment it will be a lot of information.

The problem is that Bronfenbrenner does not clarify how to classify this information in a hierarchical manner in terms of its importance and influence (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). This makes it difficult for people to understand which factor of the environment is more influential than the other and how to group these factors based on the differences of their influence on the individual development. The second reason for the theory to be difficult to implement is based on the fact that the theory advocates for an equal consideration of all factors of the environment on the development of a person, the scope becomes extensive (Paquette and Ryan, 2001). The problem with the extensive scope is that the theory does not clarify when it should be known that the details are enough. Bronfenbrenner does not clarify what should be included or excluded as the theory does not provide a detailed mechanism for development.

Scholars such as Engler (2007) argue that one of the weaknesses of the Ecological Systems Theory is that there are missing dimensions that Bronfenbrenner should've included. According to Engler (2007) resilience is a dimension that should have been included in the Ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner. Resilience is the idea that some people have the capacity to overcome any obstacles in life (Engler, 2007). According to Engler (2007) resilience should have been added in Bronfenbrenner's theory to help people explain some of the unexplainable ways in which people have managed to overcome adversities in their lives. Engler (2007) argues that Bronfenbrenner's theory only describes the assumptions of the negative effects of the individual development if exposed to adversity. This means that Bronfenbrenner should have included resilience in his theory as resilience is one of the important factors that influence the impact of the environment on a person. The theory does not have a way to explain how an individual who grows up in a context filled with adversities becomes successful in life.

In other words, the theory does not talk about the effect of a negative environment on a person who has turned out to be successful and adding resilience to the theory would have covered this gap (Engler, 2007). Thus, the theory only describes the negative effect of a negative environment to the individual's development. This can be seen from Bronfenbrenner (1979) own statement where he states that the best outcome is achieved when all systems are supportive of the developing person. This statement suggests that, the child will turn out to be well in life if everything is positive and supports the process of the child's development. Engler (2007) poses the question of "what if the systems are not supportive of the developing person but the person still manages to achieve the best outcomes?". This is where the gap occurs in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological systems theory according to Engler (2007).

Engler (2007) further argues that resilience should've been added to Bronfenbrenner's theory to explain the developing person's capacity to overcome the adversities found in the environment. If resilience was added to the theory, then the theory would not only explain the negative impact by which, a negative environment has on a child growing up in it, because there are those who have a positive outcome while growing in the same environment (Engler, 2007). However, despite the critiques made to the theory, it still stands as being one of the most relevant theories that can be used universally in different fields to understand different phenomena.

There are scholars who picked up some strengths about Bronfenbrenner's theory. The major aspect that serves as the strength of the Ecological Systems Theory is that everything in the surrounding environment is interrelated and interconnected. The main thing that this theory focusses on is the relationships both between people and between the different systems that make up our lives and the world as a whole (Christensen, 2016). Thus, the theory is very beneficial as it provides insights on all the factors that play a role in a person's growth and development (Christensen, 2016).

The Ecological Systems Theory by Bronfenbrenner "makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the individual's role and behaviour in relation to the context surrounding them on different levels" and it is a significant tool for analysing and explaining forces underlying development (Christensen, 2016). Bronfenbrenner explains the theory in a way that highlights the importance of individual differences which helps to assist people according to their individual problems or their individual needs by providing a framework to understand the relationship between the individual and their environment (Christensen, 2016). This theory is not a "one size fits all" approach, rather an approach that is focussed on the individual and

factors that influences the individual`s development. Furthermore, it is a holistic approach to development whereby the environment as a whole is factored into human development. This teaches researchers to look more broadly and inclusively at forces affecting the development of individuals (Christensen, 2016).

When researchers use this approach to human development, they get to have a deeper understanding of all factors that play a role in a person`s development which in turn provides a rich body of information. The strength of the theory will always be its ability to provide a broader understanding of a person`s development. It also shows the complexities of people`s development processes and all the different spheres involved in the process. It can be used to gain deeper and broader perspectives in different fields about different phenomena. The theory can be used as a tool to guide interventions within different fields. For example, Darling (2007) states that the theory emphasizes both the individual and the contextual systems, and the interdependent relations between these two systems. Thus, in understanding public health for example, the Ecological Systems Theory is appealing as it encompasses several contexts in a broad sense, some of which are urbanization, globalization and behaviours of individuals, all these aspects are important.

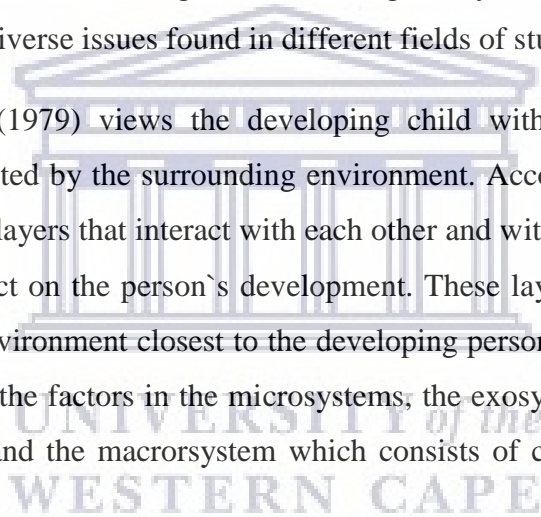
Similarly, in the field of education the Ecological Systems Theory was found to be relevant for understanding aspects within this field. For example, according to Johnson (2008), the Ecological Systems Theory is a tool for future research that aims to inform educational policy as the research might focus on clarifying the multiple layers within the complex educational system. “Seeking a deeper understanding of changes in academic achievement within a given school, for example, might begin with a model of the sources of energy loss, points of bifurcation, and levels of initial sensitivity within the layers of the system” (Johnson, 2008).

Even though resilience has been pointed out as the missing dimension in the Ecological Systems Theory, the theory itself can be used to study resilience. Masten (1994) describes the process of resilience as an interplay between an individual`s certain characteristics and the broader environment where the individual is able to find balance between stress and his/her ability to cope. Masten (1994) further argues that resilience is an important process in a person`s life transition: it is a dynamic and developmental process. Using the Ecological Systems Theory to study the process of resilience will reveal the factors in the individual and in the environment that influences this developmental process. The Ecological Systems Theory is a theory of human development and resilience is a developmental process which makes resilience a field of study on its own. In resilience studies, the Ecological Systems Theory has provided a

platform to investigate the factors found in the individual and the environment that influences a person's resilience.

According to Mwaniki et al (2017:9), the Ecological System Theory views resilience as “an ever-changing product of interacting relationships within a given ecosystemic context”. This means that, within the Ecological Systems Theory, resilience is conceptualized as a process embedded in the layers of the environment (Mwaniki et al, 2017). The Ecological Systems Theory is therefore suitable for resilience studies as it provides a framework to study resilience. Resilience is a product of interacting relationships within a given environment. Furthermore, resilience is a process bounded in the interrelated layers of the environment. For example, teachers and peers do have an impact on the resilience of a child and how a child explains or understands the process of their own resilience. The same way that parents and culture have an influence on the resilience of the developing child. This is the reason for the Ecological Systems Theory to be used to interpret and position the perspectives of Gugulethu youth about their resilience which further proves the strength of the Ecological System Theory as a theory that gives a platform to study diverse issues found in different fields of studies.

Overall, Bronfenbrenner (1979) views the developing child within complex systems of relationships that are affected by the surrounding environment. According to this theory, the environment is defined as layers that interact with each other and with the developing child as these layers have an impact on the person's development. These layers are the microsystem which is the immediate environment closest to the developing person, the mesosystem which is the interaction between the factors in the microsystems, the exosystem which are factor in the wider social settings and the macrorssystem which consists of culture, values, beliefs et cetera.



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGNS

3.0. Introduction

The previous section is literature review and theoretical framework on resilience.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory was adopted as base to this study. The central argument presented by this theory is that it is impossible to study a developing person in isolation from their environment. Thus, everything that happens in the person's ecosystem has an impact on the process of their development. This current chapter describes the methodology underpinning this research study. This chapter describes the research designs adopted for the purpose of this paper. This is followed by the sections that focus on describing the research techniques, namely: sampling methods, participants, data collection and data analysis to execute this study. Thereafter, the delimitations of the study are unveiled. Lastly, this chapter considers some ethical aspects of the study.

3.1. Research designs and methodologies

According to Blanche, Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (1999) a research design is a plan of action developed by the approach and techniques to be employed when conducting a research study. In other words, it is how the study is designed and this involves decisions about data collection and analysis to ensure that the final study adequately answers the research questions. Thus, a research design plays a pivotal role in the process of research as it provides the direction that the research will take and how data will be collected to answer the research questions.

The nature of a research design may be qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are two major traditions of research methodology in the field of social sciences (Firestone, 1987). Essentially, whereas the quantitative approach focuses on the use of numerical data, the qualitative approach emphasizes an insider perspective of a particular social phenomenon (Babbie, 2010). Moreover, qualitative methodology allows for a detailed and indepth study or analysis of the phenomenon, providing for the explanation and description of cause and effect, rather than proving cause and effect (Firestone, 1987).

The difference between qualitative and quantitative researchers is how they collect and analyse data and the information from which they draw their conclusions (Blanche et al, 1999).

“Quantitative researchers collect data in a form of numbers and use statistical types of data analyses”, (Blanche et al, 1999: 47). Whereas qualitative researchers collect data in a form of

words or observations that are presented by written or spoken language and data analyses are based on identifying and categorising themes that emerge from the data collected (Blanche et al, 1999). Choosing the suitable research design is depended on the research questions the researcher decides which research design will best answer their research questions or meets the objectives of their study. **This study adopts the qualitative research methods to answer the research questions.**

3.1.1. Qualitative research study

The aim of qualitative research is to understand some aspects of social life (including people`s belief system, perspectives and experiences) and its method is to generate words as data for analysis (Cochran and Patton 2002). In other words, the main focus of qualitative research is to understand a phenomenon in its real world setting. Moreover, the main interest of a qualitative researcher is to understand the meaning that people have constructed in their lives, that is how they make sense of their world and the experiences that they have (Merriam, 2009). This approach is best suitable for the purpose of this thesis, which is to understand how resilience is conceptualized, experienced and described by the youth of Gugulethu. Blanche et al (1999) argues that the qualitative approach is best suitable for studies whose purpose is to study a phenomenon as it unfolds in the real world.

There are challenges of using a qualitative research method. One of the challenges is that the data collected through a qualitative method cannot be verified objectively (Choy, 2014). This is due to the nature of qualitative research and its focus on people`s perspectives which could lead to false information. Time has also been listed as a challenge that qualitative researchers face. Conducting a qualitative study is time-consuming (Choy, 2014). It is a disadvantage for new researchers in the field of social science that are conducting qualitative research as this approach requires using methods such as interviews and interviews needs “skilled interviewers to successfully carry out the primary data collection activities” (Choy, 2014:102). Thus, for new and developing researchers, this is a challenge as they might not be skilled interviewers and might not carry out the primary data collection activities successfully.

3.2. Research techniques

This section is a discussion of the research techniques used to execute this research paper. The techniques that are employed to carry out a research project are divided into three categories i.e. sampling, data collection and data analysis (Blanche et al, 1999).

3.2.1. Sampling

The aim of sampling is to select a number of people who are information rich and thus capacitated to enable the researcher to answer their research questions. In the process of conducting a qualitative study or a mixed method in the case of this paper, the researcher cannot sample the entire population for his/her study, for many reasons. For one, bigger sample sizes can lead to a number of errors including multiple comparisons errors and errors associated with systematic exclusion of information (Kaplan, Chambers and Glasgow, 2014) Thus, only a smaller sample of the population can be involved in the research study. For the purpose of this paper, there are two types of sampling techniques that are adopted and these are: snowball and purposeful/judgement sampling. The sample consists of twenty young people from Gugulethu Township.

3.2.1.1. Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is when the researcher selects the most productive and information rich group of people to answer the research questions according to the judgement of the researcher (Marshall, 1996). This type of sampling is also referred to as judgement sampling whereby the researcher selects people that he/she feels like will be able to answer the research question adequately (Marshall, 1996). For example, if the researcher is investigating how young people understand resilience in a specific area, then the researcher will deliberately select young people who reside in that area where the research is conducted. Under judgement sampling, the sample group that is selected is dependent on the judgements of the researcher, and what they consider to be the characteristics of participants that will best answer the research questions. Purposive sampling was selected as the sampling method of choice in this study because not every young person at Gugulethu Township shows signs of resilience, therefore the researcher has to deliberately pick those prospective participants that show characteristics of being resilient; that is, those who appear to have successfully adapted to the adversity of township life as they would have more information and experience of their resilience.

3.2.1.2. Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling relies on referrals whereby one participant refers the researcher to other participants. This means that it is the participants that drive and contribute to the selection and sampling process (Marshall, 1996). For example, if the researcher was interviewing one person, then that person refers the researcher to their neighbours and friends who demonstrate similar characteristics of interest; this is called snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is used for this study because this study focusses on the youth of one area (Gugulethu), and the highest possibility is that these young people know each other as people who are residents of the same

area. Therefore, relying on referrals from the selected individuals was very advantageous for the researcher.

3.3. Data collection instruments

Data collection methods are a set of techniques that a researcher uses to collect data in order to answer the research questions (Corbin and Strauss, 1998). There are different methods used to collect data in qualitative research. The most common methods are: interviews, focus groups, observation, and questionnaires. To collect data therefore, for the purpose of this paper, in-depth individual interviews were conducted in Gugulethu Township.

3.3.1. Interviews

Interviewing is a data collection method and a way to gain knowledge from individuals who are participants of a research study (Kvale, 1996). In interviews, the researcher asks a set of questions and the responses of the participant becomes data for the study (Kvale, 1996). According to Hancock (2006), there are three types of interviews, namely: the structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews. The structured interviews are those that follow a strict order that is created by the researcher. The unstructured interviews are those that do not have any order (a free flowing conversation). The semi-structured interviews are interviews guided by the structure of open ended questions that the researcher asks but can be a free flow conversation at the same time.

It is important to note that in semi-structured interviews the researcher/interviewer draws up a topic guide. A topic guide is a list of all the topics that the researcher wants to cover in the process of the interview, the interview can free flow based on the response of the interviewee (Hancock, 2006). In other words, the interviewer asks one thing which may be based on the response of the participant. The interviewer then asks a follow up question which sought to understand the construct deeply. This shows us that in semi-structured interviews even though the researcher has a topic guide containing all the questions to ask the interviewee, during the interview, the interviewer poses questions out of their topic guide as a follow up on the responses of the participants in order to get more information on the topic that is being studied. The semi-structured interviews were used in this paper as a method of data collection. The topic guides were all questions related to understanding how young people of Gugulethu Township perceive resilience. These questions are as follows:

- What is a resilient youth in this high risk, Black community and what do they consider to be the key ingredients that make a child/young person resilient?
- Where do their ideas of what resilience mean come from?

- What do they know about how the Xhosa culture defines and promotes resilience among youth in their communities?
- Are there gender differences in the way they define resilience, why?

3.4. Data analysis

Once data was collected, it was interpreted and analysed. According to Hancock (2006) qualitative data analysis is a process and procedure whereby the researcher creates comprehensive information from the data collected by explaining and interpreting this data. The most important purpose of analysing data is to uncover and understand the bigger picture about what the researcher is studying by turning the data into information that the reader can use to understand the situation under study (Hancock, 2006). This process involves a summary of the data collected presented in a logical way that reveals the most meaningful information about the study phenomena (Hancock, 2006). A qualitative researcher can use different methods to analyse data. In this paper, the data analysis method used is referred to as thematic analysis method which is one of the most common forms of data analysis in qualitative research studies.

According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017:2) “thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within the qualitative data”. The goal of thematic analysis is to identify patterns in the data that are interesting or important to the research question. The researcher used these themes to answer the research question or to address issues related to the nature of the research study. This means that, thematic data analysis is not just summarising the data but is more about interpreting and making sense of the data in relation to the research question or objectives. Furthermore, thematic data analysis is used in this paper to not only analyse data according to themes but to also further understand the definition of resilience as understood by Gugulethu youth and how the ecological systems theory can be used for this purpose. The communication during the interviews was dominated by code-switching that is the use of both English and the IsiXhosa languages. Thus, the transcription consisted of translations from IsiXhosa to English. However, this activity did not impact negatively on the study.

3.5. Research reliability and validity

According to Joppe (2000:1) “the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable”. This definition of reliability implies the repetition of results or observations in quantitative research methods as numerical data can be reproduced the exact

same way. Just as Leung (2015) puts it that in quantitative research, reliability refers to exact replicability of the processes and the results. If the process of conducting research can be repeated exactly the same and produces the same results, then the research is reliable in quantitative methods. In qualitative research, validity refers to the appropriateness of the research methodology. This refers to whether or not the research question(s) is valid for the outcomes desired by the researcher and if the appropriate methodology is adopted to answer the questions. Furthermore, validity refers to whether the research design is valid for the methodology and if the sampling method, data analysis method and results and conclusion are valid for the context (Leung, 2015). To ensure validity and reliability for this study, the interviews were transcribed verbatim.

3.6. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations ensure that every participant of a research study is treated with respect and that their rights are protected. The ethical considerations during the process of data collection for this study included informed consent, voluntarily participation, no harm, confidentiality and anonymity. Before the participants started to engage with interviews, they were provided with an informed consent. An informed consent is information given to the person participating in the study about the research project (Trochim, 2006). This means that the prior to conduct interviews, the participants were fully informed about the content of research.

The consent form included information about the purpose of the research, how the findings of the study will be used and who will have access to the findings. The main purpose of the informed consent was to provide enough information about the research study so that subjects are able to decide whether they want to participate or not (Trochim, 2006). This is important as the subjects of the study is given full information of what the study is about so that they become fully aware of what they are participating in, and that their participation is voluntary. Voluntary participation means that people participate in the research study free from coercion (Trochim, 2006). Participants were informed that they are not forced to be part of the study and that they are free to withdraw their participation any time when they feel like it is affecting them negatively, or for any reason.

The participants were informed that they have the right to leave the study at any time and are not forced to provide any explanation. It is the researcher`s obligation to ensure that there is no harm done to the participants of the study. Harm can be both physical and/or psychological for example; it can be in a form of stress, pain, anxiety, diminishing self-esteem or invasion of privacy. Confidentiality means that the participant personal information is not made available

to anyone or accessed by anyone but the researcher and that any participant's identification is excluded from any reports or published documents (Trochim. 2006). The participants were informed that their identity will always remain anonymous when assessing their contribution to the research study.

3.7. Research Delimitations

The research was undertaken in Gugulethu Township, which is one of the townships in the Cape Flats in Cape Town. Townships in South Africa were originally created as separate areas for Black people, generally located on the periphery of towns and cities (Mosavel et al, 2015). As previously mentioned in this paper, crime, poverty and unemployment are some of the issues faced by people in South African townships and one would find that these problems are common across different townships (Bouwer and Mampane, 2011). Gugulethu Township is no different. This township is a high-risk environment for the development of youth that reside in this area as it is filled with many adversities that could have a negative impact on their development.

The selection of Gugulethu to conduct the study and to collect data was informed by the nature of resilience research and the need to gain an Afrocentric perspective about the concept. There are three conditions to studying resilience and these are: the presence of adversity, evidence of protective factors and positive adaptation to adversity (Theron et al, 2013). All these conditions are present in Gugulethu Township, which make it the perfect area to conduct research on resilience thus contributing to the Afrocentric perspective of what the concept means. There are four sections in Gugulethu Township, for the purpose of time, the sample was taken from only two sections which are section One and section Two. It is important to note that South Africa is not a homogenous group. Thus, there are various cultural activities practised by various racial groups. The study is limited to a certain cultural group in order to gain not only a contextualised understanding of resilience but also an understanding of how this phenomenon is enforced by culture. Only people who belong to the Xhosa cultural group were chosen as participants for this study.

3.8. Chapter summary and conclusion

The data for this study was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews. This was done so as to gain an in-depth understanding of how the youth of Gugulethu perceive resilience. To meet the research objectives, it is important to ensure that the questions that serve as topic guides are all related to what the young people of Gugulethu Township understand as resilience. Thus, there was the use of individual semi-structured interviews guided by the sub-questions of this research study. This method was used to ensure that the researcher gains indepth

information of what the youth of Gugulethu perceive as being their own resilience. The next chapter four describes and analyse the research findings.



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CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter, research methodology and methods were discussed. The study relied on qualitative research methods to collect data, using the semi-structured interviews to gather the phenomenon. Quantitative data was collected in form of primary data collection in the Gugulethu Township. This current chapter presents results of the study in relation to the research questions. The results of the study will be analysed using a qualitative thematic analysis. This method of data analysis is very flexible as it is not tied to any particular epistemological or theoretical perspective (Clarke and Braun, 2013). As mentioned in the previous section, data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews, which sought to understand the way young people of Gugulethu define the notion of resilience. It is paramount to mention that Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory has five elements as demonstrated in chapter two of this current study, from page 28-31.

To remind the reader, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory vests on explicating the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem and Chronosystem. This study adopted only the first four elements of the theory in order to understand the phenomenon in its natural setting thus, Gugulethu township, Cape Town. The fifth component is not attended to because it is not relevant for this particular study. The Chronosystem refers to changes over time and is most relevant for longitudinal studies that seek to understand a phenomenon over a specific period of time. Thus, the Chronosystem as applicable to longitudinal studies, was not relevant as the study is a mini-thesis conducted under minimum funding. It is paramount to remind the reader about the main objectives and research questions of the study.

Research objectives

The broad objective of this study is to understand conceptual clarification of resilience in African perspective, with intent to close the gap in literature, especially where Afrocentric definition of resilience, mainly in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town, is understood. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To explore theoretical framework pertaining to resilience especially in high risk communities where social ills are rife.
2. To investigate the interpretations and meanings that people in Gugulethu, Cape Town attach to the notion of a resilient young person.
3. To analyse research findings regarding the understanding of resilience in Gugulethu, Cape Town and give recommendations for future study in the area of resilience.

The research questions of the study

Question 1: What are theoretical underpinnings of resilience in high risk township areas of South Africa?

Question 2: What is a resilient young person in the perspectives of Gugulethu youth?

Sub questions:

- (i) What are the characteristics of a resilient youth in this high risk, Black community and what do they consider to be the key ingredients that make a young person resilient?
- (ii) Where do their ideas of what resilience come from?
- (iii) What do they know about how the Xhosa culture defines and promotes resilience among youth in their communities?
- (iv) If there are gender differences in the way they define resilience, why?

Question 3: What do research finding reveal about the understanding of resilience concept, in the African context, mainly in Gugulethu township, Cape Town?

4.1. Research findings and analysis

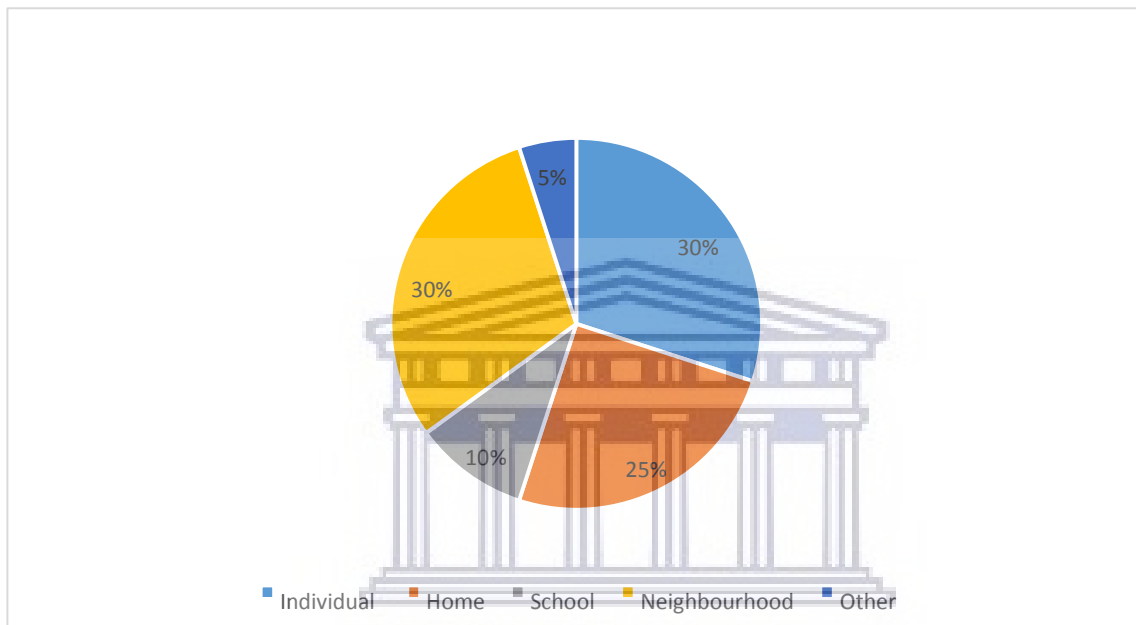
The findings were obtained from the perspectives of 20 young people who reside in Gugulethu Township. These findings reveal themes regarding the individual and the environment. Thus, the main themes that emerged from data analysis are the layers of the environment namely, the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem and Macrosystem. A detailed discussion of the themes is as follows:

4.1.1 Theme One: Microsystem

From this research, the voices of Gugulethu youth are heard as they explain their understanding of resilience concept. Findings indicated a set of qualities found in the person's own biology, home, school and the neighbourhood, and these were used to describe what the term means and factors that alters or reverses the expected negative outcomes of growing up in a context filled with adversities. Therefore, it is clear that young people of Gugulethu Township use factors

within their microsystem to explain resilience. To remind the reader, as explained in chapter two of this current study, the microsystem is the layer of the environment that is in close proximity to the developing person. The microsystem is made of the child's own biology and domains such as the home, school and the neighbourhood. A number of twenty (N = 20) respondents were interviewed. Figure 2 below demonstrate response to the question which sought to understand 'the characteristics of a resilient young person in Gugulethu and the key ingredients that makes a person to be resilient'.

Figure 2: The number of responses per sub-theme one within the microsystem



Here are four specific sub-themes that emerged from the data collected which fall under the microsystem. These sub-themes are: "individual", "home", "school" and the "neighbourhood". All the sub-themes were used by the participants to express their perceptions of what resilience is and what makes a person to be resilient in Gugulethu Township. Specifically, when asked about the characteristics of a resilient young person in Gugulethu and the key ingredients that makes a person to be resilient, all of the responses pointed to aspects of the microsystem, except for only two responses which are marked as "other" on figure two above. Thus, there are four sub-themes under the microsystem that were used by the youth of Gugulethu to explain their resilience.

Furthermore, figure 2 depicted above suggests that 100% of all the respondents participated in answering the question "what are the characteristics of a resilient youth in this high risk Black community and the key ingredients that makes a young person resilient?". Out of 100%, 30% indicated that the defining characteristics of resilience are factors found within the individual.

25% indicated that the home environment is the key ingredient that makes a person to be resilient. 10% pointed to the school environment as being the main driver of a resilience youth of Gugulethu Township. The neighbourhood of Gugulethu Township was mentioned by 30% of respondents as being one of the key ingredients that makes a person to be resilient. 5% are the respondents that did not use factors within the microsystem in their response and are marked as “other” on figure 2 above. The following section is an elaboration of the sub-themes that emerged from the participant`s responses under the microsystem, i.e. the individual, home, school and neighbourhood.

4.1.1.1. Subtheme one: factors within the individual

Within the individual`s own biology, personality traits were found by 30% of the respondents as the main factors that define a resilient person and the ingredients that makes a person to be resilient. Research shows that defining resilience by pointing to personality traits is common across studies of resilience. This discussed in the research work of scholars such as Connor and Davidson (2003) who stated that resilience is a term that represents personal qualities that enable the individual to overcome adversities. Other scholars define resilience as a personality trait that gives the individual the ability to overcome and bounce back from adversity (Ong, Bergeman, Bisconti and Wallace, 2006).

The following table (table 2) presents some of the participant`s responses that refer to factors within the individual which according to the perspectives of Gugulethu youth are the defining factors of resilience. As can be seen from this table that participants gave broad answers to the question of what a resilient young person is and the ingredients that makes a person to be resilient. Part of these broad answers is internal factors which are factors within the individual.

Table 2: Participant`s responses highlighting personality traits

Participant`s code	Responses
P3	<p>I would say it's someone who have fair amount of failures but have mastered the art of bouncing back. Someone who doesn't see failure as an endpoint but a through-point</p> <p>Having a high sense of self, knowing it's ok to make mistakes and the importance of learning from them.</p> <p>Not letting success get into your head and not letting</p>

	failures hold your heart. Basically is understanding that when the going gets tough, tough get going
P5	Their ability to see that sometimes they are on their own, and if there's anything that can make their lives turn around, it will be to accept their current situations being negative and be able to turn it positive.
P7	It is someone that is studying, goes to school and finishes school up to tertiary. A person that has goals in their life and focusses on themselves.
P12	Confidence, strong self-beliefs and trust in yourself and knowing that parents have high hopes for you” It is how a person is raised and the spirit of not giving up and refuses to give into peer pressure, refuses to do bad things (as this will disappoint the parent's expectations).
P14	It is those who think positive about the future and want to make their parents proud. People who have dreams, focus on school have goals and do not get involved in negative things. These people work and have material things like cars, expensive cell phones and have houses with expensive furniture's.
P18	A resilient person knows hardships from their own background. They focus on making their homes better and want to make a change for the better for their families. An example of a resilient person is a woman in my street who is 27 years old and has her own company. She grew up in poverty and was raised by a single parent. When growing up she and her mother would sit in people's home just to wait for a plate of

	<p>food. If someone gave her even R5, she would keep it to buy bread at home. She studied went to the University of Cape Town and now opened her own company she has her own car and has renovated the house.</p>
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Source: Author's Configuration It can be observed from the responses above that according to the youth of Gugulethu township a resilient person is:

Someone who has tenacity regardless of the experiences of difficulties in their lives. As the respondents, argued, this person is independent being aware of the adversities that surrounds them. They use these adversities to produce positive results in their lives. It appears that this positive outcome is achieved through the strength that comes from factors that are embedded within the individual. These factors include, confidence, strong self-belief, independence, having a high sense of self, being focussed, having goals in life. Furthermore, according to the views of Gugulethu youth, a resilient person in Gugulethu is focussed on themselves, has goals and refuses to give up as they have positive thoughts about the future. As can be seen from the above table that factors found within the individual are not only used to define a resilient person but also used by the participants to explain where people of Gugulethu get their resilience from. For example, participant 12 (P12) answered that, the ingredients that makes a person to be resilient are: "confidence, strong self-beliefs and trust in yourself and knowing that parents have high hopes for you". All the above description of what a resilient young person is in Gugulethu township is based on the person's own biology which is the very first level of the person's microsystem.

The findings revealed that there are specific factors that are found within the individual and have an impact on their resilience. The Ecological Systems Theory highlights the importance of the person's own unique biological factors in their interactions within their ecological systems. Bronfenbrenner (1979) for example, in chapter two of this current study explains that in the same ecological environment, it is possible for people to have different experiences. For example, siblings who are raised with same values and in the same home can have different experiences in their life processes, and this is because of their unique biological factors. Similarly, people can be in the same environment such as Gugulethu Township and have the same ecological systems, but their experiences may differ. There are those people who might not be able to overcome some of the adversities in this environment and on the hand there are those who happen to do very well in the same environment. According to the respondents, this is caused by unique personal characteristics that individuals have and these define their

resilience. Just as the theory postulates that the person's own internal factors play a role in their interactions within their ecological systems.

Bronfenbrenner found that each person's particular personality traits which is influenced by unique genetic and biological factors have a hand in their interactions within their ecological environment. This shows us that the theory acknowledges the impact that the person's own biological factors have on how they deal with situations in life. This can also be seen from how the respondents use personality traits such as being confident as being one of the defining factors of resilience and also use the personality traits mentioned in the table above as being protective factors.

4.1.1.2. Subtheme two: Factors in the home environment

There are factors that extend beyond the individual to the family/home environment in the microsystem that the participants have recognized as defining factors of the concept of resilience and what makes a person to be resilient. Family and/or the home environment is listed under one of the most protective factors of resilience in research. There are various factors within the family and/or home environment that are protective factors such as family support (Richter and Wet, 2010, Dass-Brailsford (2005) and the style of parenting (Theron and Theron, 2010). This shows that family or the home environment have an impact on the person's resilience.

Participants of this study have also highlighted the importance of family in the resilience of a person. Some of the responses that highlighted the home environment as a factor that defines resilience can be seen from the table above. For example, according to P12, the way that a person is raised is what makes them to be resilient. P14 also makes mention of making parents proud as one of the things that encourages resilience. Apart from the responses that are made up of both the personality traits and home environment in the same answers, there are those who responded by pointing out mostly to the home environment. Some of the responses are as follows:

Table 3: Participant's responses highlighting factors in the home environment

Participant's code	Participant's responses
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P4	Basically the environment that surrounds them, their parents such as the way they are disciplined, making one believe in themselves, to realise the potential in you that you can easily take action in changing a negative situation or circumstances into something better or positive.
P10	What makes a person resilient is education success, marriage responsibility... parents, family support because you need support around you in order for you to be resilient. You push yourself because you want to make someone proud, like parents and your own self.
P9	...Family support, you need support around you in order for you to be resilient.

The microsystem is made of the home environment and the interactions within the microsystem are personal relationships with family members and these interactions have a direct impact on the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This suggests that the interactions in the microsystem include any activity that take place in the home environment such as personal relationships with family members and the influence of parents in terms of how they raise their children. All of these activities have an impact on how the child`s process of development. The findings presented in table 3 reveal the importance of family support and the role of parents in the person`s resilience. According to the findings, parents promote resilience in their children by adopting a style that encourages their children to realise their full potential and believe in their abilities to change negative situations to be positive. This can be seen from the response of P4 where it is clearly stated that what makes a person to be resilient is how their parents discipline them and encourage them to realise their full potential. This explains that processes of development such as resilience cannot be understood without a careful consideration of the person`s ecological systems as this contains the building blocks of a person`s development. In this case, the microsystem proved to have factors such as family support that are building blocks of resilience. The findings explain that resilience is a process of development that is embedded in the microsystem. A positive microsystem such as the presence of family support in the life

of the child produces a positive process of development. Thus, when a developing person is supported by their family, they are likely to be resilient according to the perspectives of the respondents.

4.1.1.3. Subtheme three: Factors in the school environment

It is common in resilience research for the school to be listed as some of the factors that promote resilience in learners. The research study conducted by Wermer and Smith (1989) found that teachers at schools provide support for healthy development and learning and Nodding (2015) reported that caring relationships between teachers and learners gives the learners motivation to succeed. This shows that the school environment contributes towards the resilience of learners which is the same as in the case of Gugulethu Township. When asked about the ingredients that makes a young person to be resilient, it was mentioned that the school environment. However, only the teachers were recognized as being factors that promote resilience in schools. 10% of the respondents mentioned that teachers have an influence in the child's resilience. For example, participant 20 (P20) said: "our high school teacher made us believe that we can be anything that we want to be in life as long we work hard. The class teacher always told us that, as we are studying Geography we can be the greatest town planners".

When asked about where their ideas of what resilience are come from, one participant (P7) mentioned school teachers as part of their responses. Their response is as follows: "the ideas come from school teachers even from friends. Having positive, goal orientated friends and the support from home". Thus, Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains in page 31 of this study that the school environment makes up the person's microsystem and has direct influence on the developing person as it has a role on their process of development. Based on the findings of this study, the school environment has proven to be influential in terms of promoting resilience in the youth of Gugulethu Township according to their perspectives.

4.1.1.4. Subtheme four: Factors in the neighbourhood

30% of the respondents mentioned role models as part of their responses. When asked about the key ingredients that make a person to be resilient and where their ideas of what resilience is comes from, role models came out to be part of the participant's answers. For example, one of the participant (P16) said, "the child can get motivation from other people outside the home for example the role model, a child looks up to their role models who have achieved their goals

and lives their life to be just like their role models”. Similarly, part of P10 responses is “also, the ideas of being resilient come from role models, school teachers, social networks and motivational speaker”. The same idea is expressed by P8 as follows “it is the goals that a person has and role models. They saw it from elsewhere and get inspired to do it”. These responses answer the question of the key ingredients that makes a person to be resilient.

Participants referred to role models who are still residing at Gugulethu Township and are successful. They mentioned that these successful people are their role models as they look up to them. Most of these people have finished high school and their careers are going on well. These role models are found in the neighbourhood which according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) is one of the ecological systems that makes up the microsystem and influences the person`s development directly. It is evident that the youth of Gugulethu are influenced by role models and regard them as being one of the resilience promoting factors.

4.1.2. Theme two: Mesosystem

As explained in page 28 of this paper that the mesosystem is the ecological system that is made up of the interactions between the microsystems. For example, the relationship between the child and their peers, or the relationship between the child`s peers and the family form part of the mesosystem as they are interactions between the factors in the microsystem. According to the responses, 5% made mention of the mesosystem. Within the mesosystem, the relationship that has been explained as being part of the explanation of resilience is having friends that have acceptable behaviours. Acceptable behaviours might refer to the behaviours that are acceptable based on the person`s own beliefs about their lives and rules that are enforced at home. This shows linkages between the factors in the microsystem especially where the individual and peers are concerned. The respondent highlighted the impact of friends on how a person can turn out to be and the participant believed that friends have an impact on a person`s resilience. One of the participants explained that for a person to stay focussed and on the right lane, they need to be careful of the friends that they associate with. This participant went further to explain that “you need to associate yourself with people who have good, acceptable and positive behaviours”.

This shows the importance of choosing friends with good behaviour as being one the factors that promote resilience. The relationship between friends and the rules enforced at home, the established acceptable behaviours has been identified by the participants as one of the factors that has an impact on a person`s resilience. Specifically, this relationship between friends and the rules enforced at home including the acceptable behaviours is mentioned under the ingredients that makes a person to be resilient. This relationship is understood as the

mesosystem because it is a connection between the factors in the microsystem which are the home environment and friends. Just as Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained the mesosystem as the connection or interaction between the person's microsystems. In this case, the microsystem that are interacting with each other to create resilience are the rules at home and the friends that a person has according to the views of Gugulethu youth and how the theory explains the mesosystem.

4.1.3. Theme three: Exosystem

The exosystem is the layer of the environment that involves links between the individual's immediate contexts and social settings that the individual does not have an active role in, but is influenced by such settings, as was explained in chapter two of this study. When asked about the characteristics of a resilient person and the ingredients that make a person to be resilient, 20% of participants mentioned several factors found in the exosystem as part of their responses some of these can be observed in table 2 of this section. In explaining the characteristics of a resilient person, participants referred to systems related to the economy, education and the structural setting of the Gugulethu Township which is characterized by experiences of adversities for those who live in this area.

4.1.3.1. Subtheme one: The Economic System

The current economic status of the individual was used as a defining factor of being resilient. From the perspective of P6, a resilient young person "has their own house, has a car and supports their family". Similarly, another participant said a resilient person is someone who "has money, drinks expensive alcohol, go to expensive places and have expensive clothes and cars". Part of participant's 11 (P11) also shows the economic status of the individual as a factor that defines resilience. Participant 11 said: "A resilient person is someone who has a car, does not drink, goes to church, is educated and has educated friends. They go to beautiful places every weekend. Wear beautiful clothes, have money to spend, beautiful house, have a good background like went to model C schools, they are independent" In other words, a person's own economic status is perceived as one of the measures and indicators of resilience. From the research on resilience in the African context, indicators of a resilient person vary according to the perceptions of the research subjects and the context. For example, the study conducted by Theron et al (2013) on understanding resilience in the Basotho youth found that some of the indicators of resilience are school engagement and not being in conflict with the law. This shows that in different context, the indicators of a resilient person are most likely to differ. This adds more argument in the contestation of the definition of resilience whereby measuring

resilience is not a one size fits all and every case is likely to be unique because the contexts are not the same and resilience is context based.

4.1.3.2. Subtheme two: Education system

The education system is another factor found in the exosystem that was used by participants as being part of their definition of resilience. The South African education system allows people to get education from primary to secondary level and falls under the children`s rights that every child has a right to education. Education itself turned out to be one of the defining factors of resilience in Gugulethu youth and the levels of education that one reaches are seen as indicators of resilience in Gugulethu Township by the young people of this area. Some participants viewed education as being one of the factors that promote resilience and they used it to describe a resilient person as well. This is consistent with literature on resilience by scholars such as Dass-Brailsford (2005) who reported that in South Africa, schooling characterizes resilience.

From the responses, the participants perceive education as a prerequisite for a person to be resilient. One of the participants defined a resilient person as someone who is “studying, finishes school and goes to tertiary”. This seemed to be the most common thing that many participants mentioned when defining a resilient young person. As can be seen from part of the response of P7 in table 2 when asked about what a resilient person is, this participant said “it is someone that is studying, goes to school and finishes school up to tertiary”. However, it is important to note that education is not viewed by the participant as only a factor that promotes resilience but is viewed as one of the indicators of a resilient person. The fact that people take the responsibility of going to school and getting an education despite all the adversities present in this area is perceived by the participants as being an indicator of resilience and used to define a resilient person.

4.1.3.3. Subtheme three: Adverse structural conditions

In explaining the characteristics of a resilient person, 20% of the participants referred to the socio-economic challenges which are a result of the structural conditions specific to Gugulethu Township and these fall under the exosystem some of which are explained in chapter two. As previously mentioned in this paper, township areas are dominated by poverty, crime, unemployment in many households, this is the same in Gugulethu Township. The experiences of adversity were the strongest factors in the definition of resilience by the Gugulethu youth. These adversities are daily struggles that are common in Gugulethu Township and do not only

shape the home environment, but community safety as well as substance abuse, gangsterism/crime and high rates of poverty.

The definition of resilience in the perspective of the participants was filled with experiences of adversity that young people had encountered in their lives while growing up in Gugulethu. When asked what a resilient young person is, the responses were mostly related to the adversity that a person had experienced and overcame. All the experiences of adversities that the respondents have mentioned are related to the socio-economic challenges present in this area. For example, when defining a resilient young person, one participant said, “It is someone that knows hardships and wants to improve the situation at home, someone who strives to make a change in their homes and are focussed on success”. Similarly, another participant explained that a resilient youth in this high-risk black community is “a person that can makes it through the day, a person that has the will to survive through crime, poverty and all the hardships that are part and parcel of living in Gugulethu”.

One person made an example about a resilient child in the community and said that the child was “growing up with a single mother and being poor most of their lives, being aware of the situation to the point where even if the child is given R5 they go and give it to their mother to buy bread”. This is the same person that a number of young people that were interviewed made mention of as being a resilient person because she now owns her own company. This shows that the structural and economic conditions of Gugulethu Township shape the definition of what a resilient person is in this area.

According to the Ecological Systems Theory, the developing person does not have an active role in systems such as the economic and education systems but these systems influence the person`s process of development and these make up the exosystem. For example, the economic system that the participants used to describe resilience influence their understanding of what a resilient person looks like and how one becomes resilient, though the person does not have an active role in such economic systems and this is the essence of the exosystem. The same applies to the education system whereby the responses show how young people of Gugulethu use the education system as one of the defining factors of their resilience. Overall, the findings prove that the exosystem plays a role in the person`s process of development which in the of this paper this process is resilience. The structural conditions of Gugulethu township are situations that the developing youth of this area are not actively participating in. For example, situations like poverty are conditions that are a result of a number of factors that the young people of this area do not actively participate in. However, these situations explain their understanding of what entails resilience concept. This re-enforces the idea that the ecological system does have an

impact on the developing person. Here we see that this impact not only their way of thinking but also how they conceptualize their processes of development such as resilience.

4.1.4. Theme four: Macrosystem

The macrosystem describes the culture in which the individual lives. In the macrosystem, participants recognized factors related to culture such as cultural practises, values, beliefs and ideologies as being factors that have an impact on resilience in Gugulethu township. For example, in the Xhosa culture, there is a saying that “*ukuzala kukuzolula*”, which is a praise connected with the ideology that children ought to work hard and make their parents proud. The indirect impact of this praise is that, it meant to encourage children to see it as their obligation to free their parents from any financial struggles that they may be faced with, or by way of exiting parents’ home for marriage, through *lobola* negotiations. In recent years, this practise gave rise to the concept dubbed as the ‘Black Tax’. The Black Tax in simple terms refers to a financial burden Black South African middle class carry as a way of appreciating the family support towards the road of obtaining stardom or minimal success. Even at this, one has to exercise resilience or soldier-on as the concept insinuate undetermined day where this financial support and praise is enough (Ratlebjane, 2019). The inference is that, through the layers and levels of growth-path, Black Xhosa speaking people invented their own unique definitions towards encouraging resilience among the youth. Thus, the positive trait about this concept of “*ukuzala kukuzolula*”, is that it encourages undisrupted cash deposits to support one’s family, strengthens focus on positivity, and generally, embraces *Ubuntu* culture.

The ideology of “*ukuzala kukuzolula*” was strongly emphasised by the participants as being the major factor that promotes resilience in young people of Gugulethu township as they grow up putting value on working hard to ensure that their parents will be proud of them. Thus, from the responses presented in the previous discussions, people mentioned the importance of doing well in life to make parents proud. This idea seemed to be one of the most salient factors that promote resilience in the youth of Gugulethu.

The idea of making parents proud and providing for the family was always mentioned in the same discussions. Young people work hard because they want to make their parents proud and also to be able to provide for their family. Participants mentioned things like, helping younger siblings to go to school, taking care of the household expenses and taking care of the family in general as being some of the factors that define a resilient young person in this area. One participant said, “If a child has parents, the child works hard to make their parents proud, even if the child does not have parents, they still work hard and refuse to disappoint themselves”.

This can also be seen from the previous discussions in this section where participants mentioned “making parents proud” as being part of their definition and explanation of resilience.

Bernard (1995) mentioned high expectations as being one of the factors that promote resilience in students whereby teachers convey the message that students have everything they need to be successful, meaning that they are not expected to do any less than success. Though this idea of high expectations is explained in a different context, it can also be linked to how the idea of making parents proud promotes resilience in young people of Gugulethu. The youth of Gugulethu are expected to do well in life so that they can change the situation at home and make their parents proud. These are high expectations that young people in Gugulethu need to meet. Knowing that they are expected to do so much for their families gives them the drive to withstand obstacles and enables them to reach for success in order meet these high expectations. Thus, high expectations also serve protective functions in the youth of Gugulethu Township.

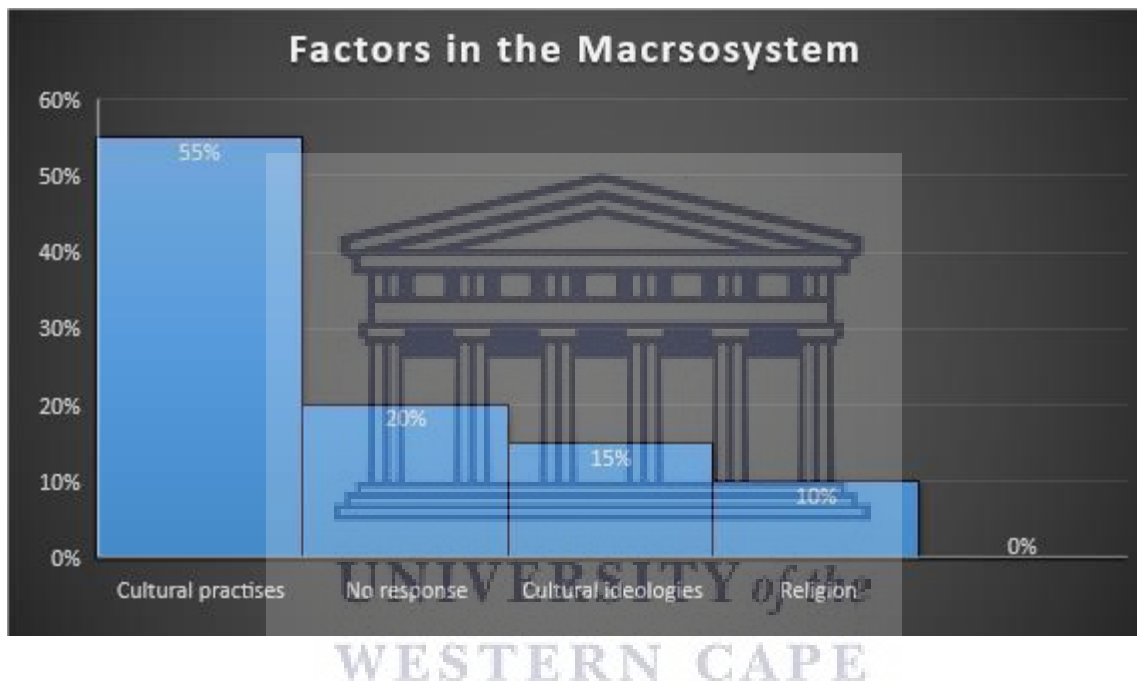
Though protective factors that promote resilience are always associated with positive development, in this case of Gugulethu youth, the high expectations that they need to meet have a negative side on their process of development. The ugly side about young people of Gugulethu living under high expectation of taking care of their families financially and ensuring that their parents are proud of them is that they are limited in their power to develop themselves as individuals financially when they start entering the working class as they give so much of what they get to their families. Assuming the responsibility of being the one that has the change the situation at home can be financially draining. Thus, the high expectations of making parents proud is a resilient promoting factor, it does have a negative impact on the youth of Gugulethu Township.

Furthermore, number four of the topic guide asked what the participants know about how the Xhosa culture defines and promotes resilience among youth in their communities. The feedback received from this question is directly linked to the macrosystem and as such, produced three main sub-themes such as cultural ideologies, cultural practises and religion. To remind the reader, in chapter two of this current study, it was mentioned that the aforementioned sub-themes play a critical role towards defining the conception of resilience.

The following pie chart in Figure 3 presents the findings of factors within the macrosystem that participants highlighted in their explanation of resilience and culture understanding. The pie chart purports that 15% of the respondents observed cultural ideologies as key in their understanding of resilience. For example, the cultural ideology respondents referred to was

“ekunyamezeleni kukho umvuzo” which is an isiXhosa phrase that speaks to the rewards of being resilient. 55% of the respondents referred to the cultural practises. These cultural practises mentioned by respondents entailed that of *Umaluko*, which is a traditional circumcision in the male initiation ritual and the Xhosa traditional wedding rituals. The 10% of respondents highlighted religion as the best answer this question of resilience concept definition. What stood out for example is Christianity religion, which serves as restraint on none-resilient behaviours. It is critical to mention that 20% of the participants did not respond to this particular question which sought to find a link between resilience and cultural practices.

Figure 3: Responses on factors in the Macrosystem



4.1.4.1. Subtheme one: Cultural ideology

According to Facchini and Melki (2011), ideology is an intellectual dimension of culture that justifies sets of beliefs, values and norms. In the Xhosa culture there are several ideologies that control people`s belief system, their values and norms. Some of these ideologies were revealed by the responses participants made, as factors that have an impact on resilience in Gugulethu Township. For example, participant 3 said: “There's a great saying in Xhosa, “*Ekunyamezeleni kukho umvuzo*”, which is a concept that which speaks about the rewards of being resilient or embodying of tenacity traits”. This saying, for example infer to the rewards that are directly linked with being successful after withstanding adversities.

When responding to the question of culture and resilience, participant 4 said: “It is basically promoting the principle about helping one another where we can in order to prosper and progress and make the township a better and positive setting for everyone who lives in the township and outside”. This statement brings a concept of social cohesion as a form of supporting one another, in a community, in order to bring support to resilience, that which will bring greater benefits to the one-self and the society. This response shows the principles behind the concept of *Ubuntu* which is prevalent in the African communities. This has also been noted by scholars such as Theron et al (2013) in their study of the resilience of Basotho youth that Ubuntu does play a role in resilience as reported in literature review of this paper.

4.1.4.2. Subtheme two: Cultural practises

There are two specific cultural practises that participants perceived as promoting resilience; these are Umaluko (traditional circumcision in the male initiation ritual) and the Xhosa traditional wedding rituals. It was explained that marriage teaches girls to be resilient as they are responsible of building a home and holding things together in the household. Participant 12 expressed that “women are taught to be wives, how to serve their husbands and how to build homes they are taught to be resilient and how a wife is supposed to fight for her marriage”. Part of participant`s 1 response to the question of culture and resilience was “women in general have so many responsibilities in a marriage and it`s tough for them but they have to be resilient to make it work”. Under the same question, P5 said “if a boy goes to a bush to become a man they expected to change their old behaviours but that depends on individuals if you not willing to change then the culture is just there as a “lead or something to be followed (lack of better words)”. Participant 11 said “the bush makes boys to be resilient, there are taught there about how to be strong and marriage makes both the boys and girls to be strong and resilient to head a house”. 55% of the respondents believe that these cultural practises make young men and women in Gugulethu to be independent which in turns makes them to be resilient. Other than the two cultural practises that differentiate the definition of resilience by gender, participants did not express any other gender differences in the definition of resilience.

4.1.4.3. Subtheme three: Religion

Still within the macrosystem, religion was reported by some of participants as being one of the factors that promote resilience; there were statements that were repeated during the interviews about going to church and preaching the word of God. However, religion came up in a very few interview as only 10% of the respondents highlighted the importance of religion in

resilience; this can be seen in figure 3. Religion is commonly reported as one of the coping mechanisms that help people to overcome adversities.

According to the Ecological Systems Theory, the macrosystem is the culture that the child lives in. Culture is a way of life and impacts how a person is, their behaviour and choices in life. Culture has been found to have an impact on resilience by scholars as discussed in chapter two. Scholars such as Gunnestad (2006), Grotberg (1995) and Theron et al (2013) reported on the impact of culture in resilience. The findings of this study also add to the idea that culture as a whole which includes cultural ideologies, cultural practise and religion are some of the building blocks of resilience as perceived by the youth of Gugulethu township.

4.2. Discussion of research findings

This study explored research questions that focussed on the definition of resilience within the South African context using the perspective of Gugulethu township youth to get a deeper understanding of the resilience of South African Black youth. The definition of resilience by Gugulethu youth adds credence to the broad definitions of resilience by a number of scholars such as Theron et al (2013), Masten et al (1990) Schoon and Bynner, 2003). As explained in chapter 2, that broadly, resilience is defined as positive adaptation in the face of adversity. What is important to note is the two criteria that Theron et al (2013) explained to be crucial in describing a resilient young person: first, there must be a context of adversity identified and secondly the young person must be able to adjust well to this context of adversity.

There is evidence of the two criteria of defining resilience in the findings presented on the previous section of this paper. Gugulethu youth define a resilient young person by first mentioning the presence of adversity in their context of development which includes substance abuse, crime and high rates of poverty. Secondly, in their definition of resilience they refer to a resilient person as someone who was able to overcome the hardships faced in the township life. Specifically, this can be seen from theme three when respondents used the experiences of adversity as defining factor of resilience whereby a resilient person according to their views is someone who experienced adversities and overcame them. This further agrees with literature on resilience that one cannot study resilience without the presence of adversity and positive adaptation to adversity.

The findings suggest that young people of Gugulethu perceive a resilient person as someone who goes through challenges, accept the challenge and strive to rise above the challenges. Accepting challenges is one of the core concepts that scholars such as Theron et al (2013) found when describing resilient Basotho youth which is also a study conducted in the African context.

Thus, accepting challenges is one of the concepts that can be used to describe a resilient young person. In the views of the Gugulethu youth, a resilient young person is someone who is aware of their challenges, accepts the challenges and fights to overcome these challenges.

The tools that people use to fight challenges are identified in the findings and can be understood as protective factors to match the language of resilience research. These tools are what promote resilience and help to fight the negative impact of adversity and they were reported mostly when the participants were asked about the ingredients that make a young person to be resilient. The findings of the current study indicate that resilience is promoted by both the internal and external factors. According to the views of Gugulethu young people, a person becomes resilient as a result of both the internal factors which include personality traits such as being confident and external factors which are factors found in the layers of the environment. This is highly consistent with the literature of resilience research where it is agreed that resilience is promoted by the combination of both the external and internal factors (Grotberg, 1995). This further adds credence to the view of resilience by the Ecological Systems Theory.

According to the Ecological Systems Theory, the child's biology is the primary microenvironment where the child's development process starts, and the entire environment does have an influence on the child's development. Following on the understanding of resilience as being a process of development, we saw from the results that the factors that promote resilience are both internal and external. Data shows that the internal factors such as being goal orientated, focussed in life, confidence et cetera... are what makes a person to succeed in a high risk community of Gugulethu Township. The results also suggest that other factors within the community such as teachers at schools and role models inspire young people to remain focussed on their dreams in life.

This extends the understanding of the idea that the surrounding of the developing child has an impact on the child's process of resilience because the factors that promote resilience are found within and around the child. Thus, the findings of the current study further the understanding and suitability of the Ecological Systems Theory in studies that seek to explain resilience of black young people in South Africa. The way that the youth of Gugulethu understand and explain resilience is mostly rooted within the culture and the context of this township. The context of Gugulethu township i.e. the structure of the township, socio-economic issues that are faced by the households such as poverty, unemployment and crime and the Xhosa cultural practises, values and ideologies.

Findings such as making parents proud and providing for the family can be directly linked to the history of this township and the Xhosa cultural ideology of young people being born to

make their parents proud. As explained in the background of this paper, Gugulethu Township was created during the apartheid era to keep black people away from the places in the inner city of Cape Town which were only occupied by white people. The way that the townships are structured poses a lot of challenges to the socio-economic status of many households. Just as other townships in South Africa, these challenges include crime, poverty and violence. As it is known, the apartheid government refused quality education for Black youth at the time. Together with the expectations of making their parents proud, the youth of Gugulethu are put under the expectations of achieving what their parents were denied. For example, it is known that the apartheid era denied education for Black people during the time; this means that the parents or older members of the families were denied education, the youth of today values education and marks it as one of the core concept in their narratives of resilience.

Still living in poverty, young people who are entering the working class are put under the tasks and expectation of changing the situations at their homes and this also follows the cultural ideology of children being born to make their parents proud. It can be seen from the responses whereby participants mentioned that one of the factors that promote resilience is the idea of taking care of the family in general and to have a better life. People's definition of resilience is based on the struggles that are the legacies of apartheid; they define a resilient person as someone who works hard and overcome the daily struggles. These daily struggles are all part of the legacies of apartheid and people of Gugulethu are still faced with challenges of redressing the inequality created by the apartheid government. According to the views of Gugulethu youth, the lifestyle is an indicator of resilience. What a person is and what they have are determiners of whether or not the person is resilient. If someone has a job, a car and a house, they are defined as being resilient by the youth of Gugulethu which all starts with overcoming adversity.

These findings reveal that the overall understanding of resilience is bounded to the context and culture of Gugulethu Township. The findings suggest that young people of Gugulethu define resilience based on the structural conditions and the dominant culture in this Township area. Thus, their understanding of resilience is rooted in the Xhosa culture. During their process of development, young people of this area are faced with a number of challenges such as poverty that they need to overcome. Using both the internal and external protective factors such as personality traits, role models and teachers at school they are able to fight the challenges that they are faced with. All these protective factors are found in the person's environment thus it was reported that the protective factors are found in the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. They overcome these challenges and the life that they choose to live, the clothes they wear, the cars they drive are all indicators of their resilience. Overall, the

perceptions of resilience in Gugulethu Township are framed within the Ecological Systems Theory because all their ideas of resilience are embedded in their environment.

The findings of this study are not identical to the findings that are reported in the Western context that dominates literature on resilience. These findings are unique to the African context whereby the context of inequality and specific cultural practises, values and ideologies are the main factors that promote resilience in the Black youth of Gugulethu Township. Concepts such as Ubuntu demonstrate the Afrocentrism of Gugulethu youth in their definition of resilience. This study reveals that the understanding of resilience in Gugulethu Township is refined by the Xhosa culture and the structure of the township as a whole. The following table presents the summary of findings that discusses the relationship between resilience and the Xhosa culture.

Table 4: The Xhosa culture and resilience

Cultural ideology and values in Gugulethu township by Xhosa speaking respondents	Cultural practises and English translation
<i>Ekunyamezeleni kukho umvuzo- There are great rewards in withstanding difficult situations.</i>	Umaluko- Xhosa initiation process/ traditional circumcision of men, specifically.
<i>Ukuzala kukuzelula (Umakoti) - Giving something greater to the parents</i>	Xhosa Traditional marriage ritual
Ubuntu- I am because we are	Payment of Black Tax as way of appreciation for family support to stardom and minimal support. Indirect impact is increasing social cohesion, neighbourly
<i>Inkawu ityiwa ilila</i>	Whether you feel pain of adversities, you ought to face them as the monkey gets eaten regardless of its agony.
<i>Ubomi ngumzamo</i>	Persistent tolerance of adversities and rising above them will make you a golden person who will shine for the world to admire.
<i>UThixo unceda ozincedayo</i>	God help those who work hard towards their positive dreams (<i>this is linked to religion</i>)

Source: Configured by the Author

The above Table 4 is a summary of the findings that shows what the participants know about how the Xhosa culture promotes resilience. According to the findings discussed in this chapter,

there is evidence that the Xhosa culture promotes resilience through ideologies and cultural practises that are held with high regard of value to the young people of Gugulethu Township, in Cape Town. There are cultural values instilled in those that are raised in the Xhosa culture. These values are instilled in them through different ways, upon which some of them are the common daily utterances that one would find in day to day conversations, chiefly, when social ills periodically strike.

The findings point to some of the underlying Xhosa ideologies that are well known by the people of the Xhosa culture and can be linked to the participant`s perspectives of their own resilience in Gugulethu township. Some of these ideologies are: *Inkawu ityiwa ilila* this means that whether you feel pain of adversities, you ought to face them as the monkey gets eaten regardless of its agony. This directly speaks to not giving up and being resilient even when faced with the most adverse situations. Another underlying Xhosa ideology is: *Ubomi ngumzamo* which refers to the persistent tolerance of adversities and rising above them will make you a golden fine person, who will shine for the world to admire. The most common ideologies in the Xhosa culture that speaks to Christianity is “*UTHixo uncenda ozincendayo*” meaning: God help those who work hard towards their positive dreams (*this is linked to religion*). This shows that the Xhosa culture is filled with ideologies that encourage resilience.

Specifically, the participants have mentioned some ideologies that they felt like are the resilience promoting factors. For example, *Ekunyamezeleni kukho umvuzo* is one of those sayings that one would find in the everyday language of the Xhosa people and has been identified by a participant as being a factor that promotes resilience. This saying encourages people who are in the midst of difficulties to not give up and to remember that there are rewards of withstanding difficulties in life. This can be associated with how the Xhosa culture promotes a fighting spirit to live by. Thus the Xhosa culture promotes being resilient by having such sayings in the everyday language which serves as a reminder that one should not just give up when faced with adverse situations, but should hold on and be resilient for there are rewards of being resilient which a person would not get if they had given up. This can be directly linked with being successful or achieving something after withstanding difficulties.

Ukuzala Kuzelula this is an African proverb that refers to the child appreciating their parents by giving them something greater. This proverb instils values in young people to work hard and give back to their parents. Thus, according to the findings the participants mentioned making parents proud as one of the factors that promote their resilience; this clearly shows the link between this proverb and resilience. In other words, no matter what the child goes through

in life, they need to withstand all their challenges so as to meet the greater aim which is to well and make the parents proud.

Ubuntu is a well-known African proverb that gives us an Afrocentric perspective on resilience based on the views of participants. The response that referred to *Ubuntu* when explaining resilience (It is basically promoting the principle about helping one another where we can in order to prosper and progress and make the township a better and positive setting for everyone who lives in the township and outside). Some of the principles behind the concept of *Ubuntu* includes helping one another. It is important to note that the concept of *Ubuntu* is applicable to other African cultural groups and is not limited to the Xhosa culture as it is best understood as an African proverb.

According to the findings, the process of resilience might differ in boys and girls due to the culture that is dominant in this area. This suggests that there is a possibility that the process of resilience of a young man and a young woman might not be described the same way. Therefore, the definition of resilience is gendered based on two cultural specific cultural practises that the participants mentioned. These cultural practises are *Umaluko* and Marriage. *Umaluko* is a Xhosa initiation process or a traditional circumcision. This is whereby a young boy goes to the bush as an act of courage to transform from being a boy into being a man. According to the views of Gugulethu youth, the values that are instilled in man after going through the process of *Umaluko* include being the man of the house and taking care of the family as a man and this makes the male gender to be resilient as they live by these values. It is important to note that in the Xhosa culture, *uMaluko* is a practise for both men and women. However, the most commonly practised circumcision is that of males in the areas such as Gugulethu as the female circumcision is rare and is mostly done in the rural areas.

For a woman being a new bride “Umakoti” comes with a lot of responsibilities some of which include being the one that builds a household and hold it together for the husband and the children. A young woman who gets married in the Xhosa culture is expected to do a lot for her husband, the family of the husband and more. Some of the most common things that the new bride is expected to do in the very first stages of being married is to stay with the husband’s family, cook, clean and basically do all the house chores by herself. Part of the marriage is all about the woman working hard all by herself while trying to prove that she is worthy and that she can handle a household. This according to the views of Gugulethu youth is a cultural practise that differentiates the resilience of young people of this area by gender.

4.3. The importance of the Ecological systems theory in the discussion of findings

This research highlights the importance of the Ecological systems theory in understanding resilience at Gugulethu Township. The findings of this study show that the youth of Gugulethu understand resilience as an interactive process between the individual and the environment. Their definitions of resilience are filled with factors found in the layers of the environment where contexts such as the individual, family, neighbourhood and culture are reported as factors that shape resilience according to the perspectives of Gugulethu youth. This adds credence to how the theory understands development and processes associated with development such as the processes of resilience. The theory stipulates that a person's development cannot be studied in isolation from the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, resilience is reported as a process that is embedded to the environment.

The findings of the current study are broadly consistent with those that are reported by other scholars in the field of resilience research and how resilience is conceptualized. Recent conceptualizations of resilience are made up of both the internal and external factors that include the youth and their ecologies (Masten and Right, 2010). Just as the findings of the current study show that the youth of Gugulethu Township explained resilience using both the internal and external factors found in the environment. Each of the layers of the environment shape the understanding of resilience in Gugulethu youth. From the individual in the microsystem, there are personality traits that are reported as being defining of resilience. The family also adds to what makes a person to be resilience. The understanding of resilience extends beyond the family to the larger community and schools whereby the youth described factors such as role models and teachers as being resilience promoting factors.

The relationship between the rules at home and friends that a developing person makes have also been reported as having a positive impact on resilience. This shows the interactions between the home environment and friends which are factors of the microsystem which is why it falls under the mesosystem as the mesosystem is made of the connections or interaction between the person's microsystems. Some of the descriptions of a resilient person by the youth of Gugulethu are made based on the exosystem. As can be seen in the presentation of findings, people in Gugulethu Township use factors that can be traced in in the exosystem. These factors are education and economic status. In addition, cultural values, ideologies and practises are reported as being factors that promote resilience in young people of Gugulethu, and these are found in the person's macrosystem.

The conceptualization of resilience in Gugulethu Township is strongly influenced by the environment. What resilience is and what makes a person to be resilient are all answers explained by participants using factors found in all the layers of the environment, as explained by the Ecological systems theorists.

Table 5: Understanding of Resilience in Gugulethu Township (GT) versus Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory (BEST)

Micro-system		Meso-system		Exo-system		Macro-system	
BEST	GT	BEST	GT	BE ST	GT	BEST	GT
<i>Immediate environment</i>		<i>Connections</i>		<i>Indirect Environment</i>		<i>Social and Cultural Values</i>	
Personality traits	Individual	Having friends with good behaviour		Economic system		Culture	Umaluko and Xhosa traditional marriage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supportive family Parenting style Values at home 	How a person is raised and family support.	Home		Education system		Ideologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ukuzala kukuzelula Ekunyamezel eni ukhona umvuzo
Teachers who encourage children to work hard and be anything that they want to be in life.	School			Adverse structural conditions		Attitudes	
Role models	Neighbourhood						

4.4. Chapter summary and conclusion

This chapter presented the research findings on the conceptual clarification of the definition of resilience using the perspectives of Gugulethu youth. Data for the study was collected through interviews which were guided by the same set of questions. The findings reveal that young people of Gugulethu Township use factors found in their surrounding environment to define resilience. The environment is hereby divided into four layers according to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, these layers are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem which all have an impact on the person's resilience and these systems blend together on a daily basis. Furthermore, the findings showed that the definition of resilience is embedded to the culture and the context of the area under study. As can be seen in the case of Gugulethu Township, young people use factors such as cultural ideologies and values to conceptualize resilience. The context shapes the ideas of resilience; both the context and culture answer the question of what a resilient person is and what makes a person to be resilient. The following chapter is the conclusion and recommendation that are based on the findings discussed in this section.



CHAPTER FIVE:

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research findings and the analysis. The findings revealed factors embedded in the definition of resilience, chiefly discussed in microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem elements, coined by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as slightly unique to South African context, mainly Gugulethu Township, Cape Town. This chapter therefore describes the conclusions derived from the findings of this study on the conceptual clarification of the definition of resilience: An African perspective in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town. The conclusions are based on the purpose, objectives, research questions and the results obtained from the perspectives of young people in Gugulethu Township. The research questions and objectives that this study was set to address are:

Research objectives

The broad objective of this study is to understand the conceptual clarification of resilience in African perspective, with intent to close the gap in literature, especially where Afrocentric definition of resilience, mainly in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town, is understood.

Sub-objectives of the study are as follows

Objective one: To explore theoretical framework pertaining to resilience especially in high risk communities where social ills are rife.

Objective two: To investigate the interpretations and meanings that people in Gugulethu, Cape Town attach to the notion of a resilient young person.

Objective three: To analyse research findings regarding the understanding of resilience in Gugulethu, Cape Town and give recommendations for future study in the area of resilience.

Research questions

Question 1: What are theoretical underpinnings of resilience in high risk communities where social ills are rife?

Question 2: What are the interpretations and meanings that people in Gugulethu, Cape Town attach to the notion of a resilient young person?

Sub questions:

- What are the characteristics of a resilient youth in this high risk, Black community? and what do they consider to be the key ingredients that make a young person resilient?

- Where do their ideas of what resilience come from?
- What do they know about how the Xhosa culture defines and promotes resilience among youth in their communities?
- If there are gender differences in the way they define resilience, why?)

Question 3: What do research finding reveal about the understanding of resilience in Gugulethu Township and what would be the recommendation for future study?

5.2. Research conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the theoretical underpinnings of resilience in a high-risk area such as Gugulethu township are rooted in the Ecological Systems Theory. The findings revealed that resilience is understood by the youth of Gugulethu as a process embedded in their surrounding environment. Thus, the descriptions, explanations and the overall definition of a resilient young person in Gugulethu township are all embedded on factors found in the four layers of the environment, i.e., the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. Thus, the Ecological Systems Theory framed this study and the four layers of the environment served as themes of data analysis.

In the perspective of Gugulethu youth, a resilient young person is someone who has positive personality traits, someone who is goal orientated, focussed, obedient, has confidence, inner strength and is a dreamer with a spirit of not giving up. The key ingredients that make a person be resilient are several factors found within the person, family, school, neighbourhood and culture. Specifically, it is the personality traits, family support, the Xhosa cultural values, ideologies and practises, encouragements from teachers at school and role models found in the neighbourhood, that are the defining factors of resilience according to the youth of Gugulethu Township. Based on the perspectives of Gugulethu youth, their ideas of resilience come from what they see from their role models, their strong will to change the situations at home, their teachers at schools and the lifestyle of other young people who are successful and they consider these young people to be examples of resilient people.

According to the knowledge of Gugulethu youth, the Xhosa culture promotes resilience by through use of cultural ideologies, values and practises that are instilled in young people as they are born and raised by this culture. These values and ideologies shape their everyday thinking and behaviours. For example, in the Xhosa culture as reported by the participants and discussed in chapter four of this mini-thesis, it is important for a child to grow up and make their parents proud by taking care of their parents when the child starts working in the corporate world, this makes people to strive and be resilient despite all the adversities that they are faced with.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are specifically two cultural practises that the participant identified as having an impact on a child's positive outcome and encouraging resilience. These cultural practises are: *Umaluko* for males and the Xhosa traditional marriage for females. Young people who go through these cultural practises are taught to be independent which makes them resilient as they are taught to be matured and take care of their families. Overall, the findings reveal that the understanding of resilience in Gugulethu Township is based on different factors found in the environment of Gugulethu Township. In this Township the factors that impact resilience are internal and external, starting from the person's own personality traits, to the home environment, the school up to the neighbourhood. The overall Xhosa culture that is dominant in this Township has a significant influence on the how the young people understand and explain their process of resilience. This furthers the understanding that there is a link between resilience and culture. Thus, the findings of this study reveal how the Xhosa culture shapes the resilience of the youth of Gugulethu Township.

Furthermore, the study found that the majority of young people in Gugulethu Township were not familiar with the concept of "resilience". During the interviews, resilience had to be broken down as a concept using the definition provided by google scholar and explained in IsiXhosa so that people can understand what the concept meant. In most cases, participants understood what the concept meant after going through the definition of the concept provided by google scholar. This may be due to a number of reasons one of which could be the fact that the term *resilience* does not have an equivalent word in isiXhosa language.

At the heart of Gugulethu township there are values, ideologies and practises that are embedded in the Xhosa culture that contributes towards people's understanding of resilience and are part of the explanation of what makes a person to be resilient. The structural conditions of this township shape the lives of people and in turn impact their processes of resilience. This study proved that the Ecological Systems Theory is suitable for resilience studies in the African context. The mechanisms that young people of Gugulethu need to cope with the adversities present in their context of development are factors found in their own surrounding environment.

5.3. Recommendations and Future research

5.3.1. Recommendations

The researcher makes the following recommendations for researchers, policy makers and teachers based on the findings of this study taking into consideration the limitations of this study. There are four recommendations in total, the first one is an explanation of the term resilience in African languages, this is followed by public awareness programs on resilience,

the third one is about integrating resilience into the South African education system. The last recommendation that the researcher makes is about the training the teachers about how to promote resilience in learners at schools.

5.3.1.1. Recommendation one: An explanation of the term “resilience” in African languages

In African languages such as IsiXhosa, there is no equivalent term of *resilience*. From the findings it was clear that some of the young people of Gugulethu Township do not know what the concept of resilience means. Linguists should work on a task of providing an adequate equivalent term or explanation of resilience and all the other terms associated with resilience such as protective factors in African languages. This would be beneficial for the public of places like Gugulethu township where the dominant languages do not have an equivalent term of resilience. This means that the public will be able to get a deeper conceptual understanding of resilience which in turn will increase the understanding of the processes associated with resilience. People tend to understand things better when explained in a language that they are familiar with. Thus, if the explanation of resilience was to be available in IsiXhosa, people who speak this language will be able to understand and relate better. It is therefore important to have the explanation or/and the term of *resilience* available in the African languages. This will further contribute to gaining an Afrocentric definition of resilience in an African language.

5.3.1.2. Recommendation two: Resilience public awareness programs

Recommendation one suggests that there should be programs aimed at informing the public about resilience in a language that the public will understand. More needs to be done in educating the public about resilience and how to promote it in children. The researchers have a task of investigating the different aspects of resilience for the South African government to use in teaching the public about resilience. This will also help the adults, caregivers and parents to be aware of what they should do to help their children to be resilient and avoid unintentionally crushing their resilience. Following on the findings by the international resilience project which states that adults tend to crush resilience in children, because of knowledge bankruptcy. Thus, if the public is made to be aware of resilience, this negative impact caused by the lack of knowledge can be minimized by resilience awareness programs. The awareness programs should be made based on research done in different contexts in South Africa and all these findings should be incorporated and used to develop awareness programs based on the findings of how best to promote resilience in specific contexts. This will also

contribute to an Afrocentric definition of resilience where resilience would be defined according to research informed African perspectives.

5.3.1.3. Recommendation three: Integration of resilience into the education system

It is hereby recommended that resilience be integrated into the education system especially in schools that are in the township areas of South Africa where young people are faced with several adversities present in these areas. Learners should be taught from an early age at schools about resilience and how to promote resilience or how to gain personality attributes that can serve them as resilience promoting factors. This can be done through having school subjects specifically aimed at training young children to be resilient and teaching them about resilience in general. This will help to build and strengthen the resilience promoting factors in children especially for those whose home environment does not provide them with the tools to be resilient. In addition, this will help children from an early age to be aware of their environment and how they can use it to best maximize their full potentials. Children spend most of their time at schools, if the school environment is filled with an atmosphere of resilience through subjects that teach about resilience or other activities within the school environment, this would help them to gain knowledge and skills that enhances their resilience. This will also have a great psychological impact on children and lay a strong foundation for adults who are aware and able to overcome adversity.

5.3.1.4. Recommendation four: Training teachers about how to promote resilience in learners

Generally, teachers are viewed as people who pass on knowledge to learners. It is recommended that teachers be equipped with adequate skills and specific guides to promoting resilience in learners. From the findings, respondents highlighted the role of teachers in the process of their resilience which shows the importance of teachers on the resilience of learners. Thus, providing further training to teachers for them to be agents of resilience would be beneficial for learners. If teachers are provided with a guide to promote resilience in learners at schools, the learners would be enabled with tools and knowledge to understand and build their own resilience. This will help to create specific educational contents about resilience.

5.4. Future research

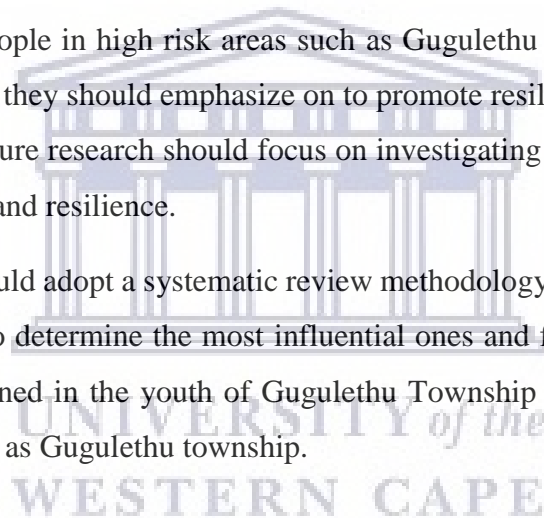
It is important that the findings of this study to not be generalized in all the townships of Cape Town as different townships have different cultures. Further research can be conducted in different townships in Cape Town and the whole of Africa with larger samples to understand

the relationships between different cultures and the protective factors in the journey to creating an Afrocentric definition of resilience. There should be a thorough investigation about the extent of the relationship between different contexts and protective factors to determine what would best work for the youth of South Africa in different areas.

Based on the recommendations above, future research should be done in different areas of South Africa and Africa at large to create a more context based Afrocentric understanding of resilience. The results of such investigations should therefore be used as a model to promote resilience in schools and these models should be tested in different schools around Africa. In addition, future research should also consider looking deep into using the research findings to create an adequate context-based guide to promote resilience and evaluate its suitability for the promotion of resilience in township schools.

It is also important that future research should investigate the specific aspects of culture and the extent that each has on resilience to determine the most influential cultural aspect that increases the resilience of young people in high risk areas such as Gugulethu township. This will help people to understand what they should emphasize on to promote resilience. To add on African literature on resilience, future research should focus on investigating the relationship between different African cultures and resilience.

Lastly, future research should adopt a systematic review methodology on the protective factors found in township areas to determine the most influential ones and find ways in which these factors could be strengthened in the youth of Gugulethu Township and other areas with the same or similar conditions as Gugulethu township.



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APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- a. What are the characteristics of a resilient youth in this high risk, Black community?

and what do they consider to be the key ingredients that make a young person resilient?
- b. Where do their ideas of what resilience come from?
- c. What do they know about how the Xhosa culture defines and promotes resilience among youth in their communities?
- d. If there are gender differences in the way they define resilience, why?

